

382

162.239

THE
DASH of the DAY,
A COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED WITH UNIVERSAL APPLAUSE
BY HIS MAJESTY'S SERVANTS OF
THE THEATRE-ROYAL, NORWICH.

BY
FRANCIS LATHOM,

AUTHOR OF MEN AND MANNERS, MYSTERY, &c. &c.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Norwich:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

BY J. PAYNE, BOOKSELLER, MARKET-PLACE;

And to be had of all the Booksellers in Norwich and the Counties
of Norfolk and Suffolk. In London, of West and Hughes, Pater-
noster-Row; and G. Kearsley, No. 46, Fleet-Street; and of some
one Bookseller in every principal town in the Kingdom.

1800.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.



Address.

THE Author of the following Comedy, cannot omit the present opportunity of publicly returning his most sincere thanks to the Performers, for their kind and spirited exertion of their excellent talents, which ensured the success of his piece.—To the Acting Manager also every acknowledgement is due from him, for the unremitting and friendly attention paid by him to the getting up of the Comedy.—And to the Public he stands indebted, for the very flattering reception of a Play which was written before he had completed his eighteenth year.

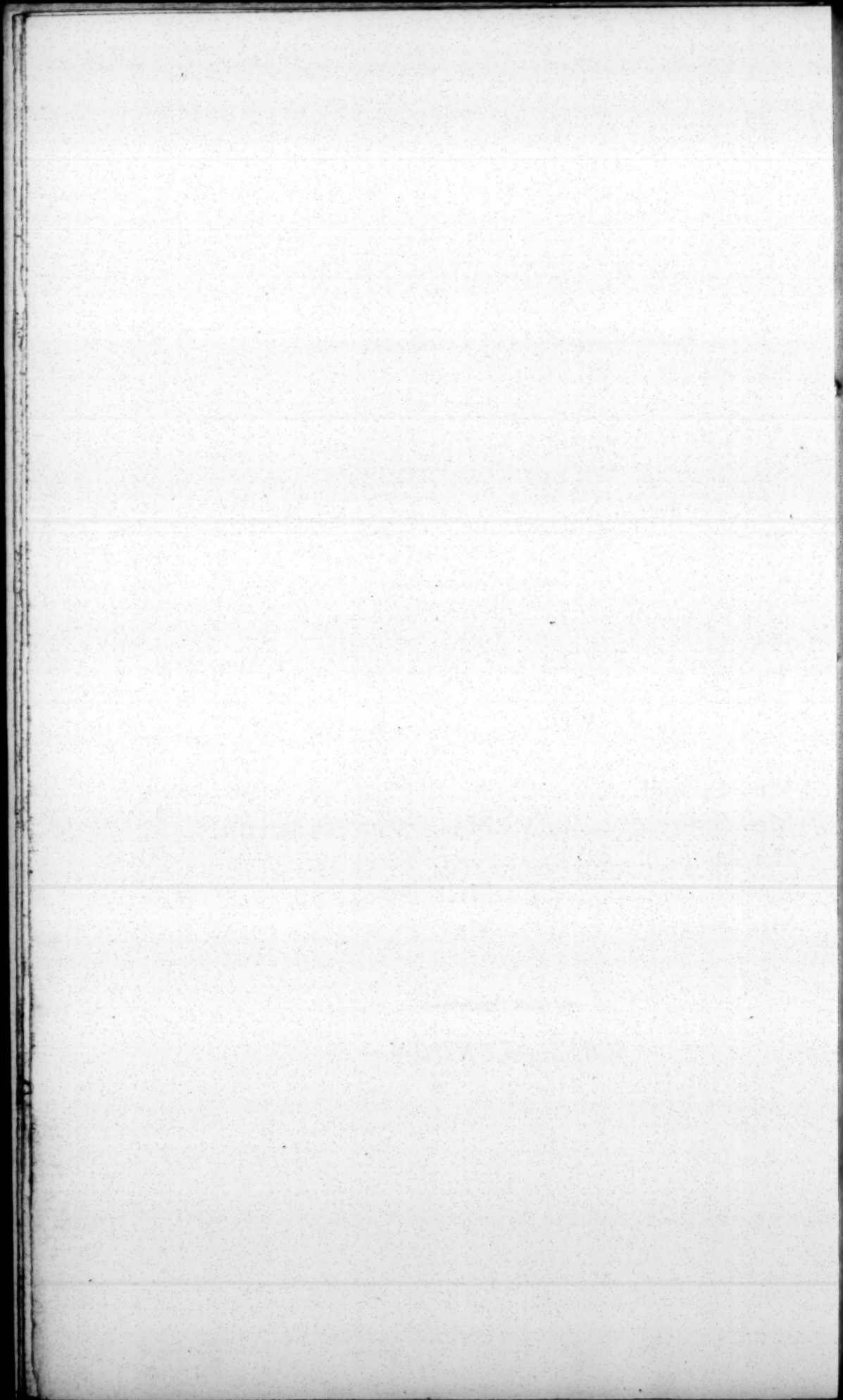
CHARACTERS.

Sir Gabriel Hardyne,.....MR. LINDOE.
Sir Frederick Floricourt,...MR. DWYER.
Mr. Fretquil,.....MR. BLANCHARD.
Mr. Sedley,.....MR. WHEATLEY.
Henry Maitland,.....MR. MALLINSON.
Modish,.....MR. BROWNE.
Simon,.....MR. MILDENHALL.
Thomas,.....MR. J. BEACHEM.

George, Porter, Servants, &c. &c.

Mrs. Fretquil,.....MRS. HENLEY.
Mrs. Sedley,.....MRS. WORTHINGTON.
Harriot,.....MRS. TAYLOR.
Emma,.....MISS GODDARD.
Mrs. Jenkins,.....MRS. POWELL.


SCENE—LONDON.





THE
DASH OF THE DAY.

Act the First.

SCENE THE FIRST—AN ANTI-ROOM AT
SIR FREDERICK FLORICOURT'S.

*(Porter discovered asleep—loud knocking
without.)*

Enter GEORGE, and wakes him.

Geo. **W**HY, John! John! don't you hear
the bell?

Port. I wish those that ring them had to
dance after their jingling, and I fancy they
would soon be out of fashion.

(Exit.)

Geo. True enough, as John says, we ser-
vants of people of quality have no rest, either
night or day.

THE DASH OF THE DAY,

Enter MODISH, speaking as he enters.

Mod. Why you rascal, how long am I to be kept ringing at the door, when you get into these confounded sleeping fits?—George, discharge the hack (*exit George*). Curse the dice, stript of every guinea again; I have as bad luck as my master (*re-enters George*). George, bring me a glass of red-wine negus, half and half, and tell Betty to warm my bed. (*Exit George*).

MODISH sits down, and leans his head upon the table.

Enter SIMON, gaping, as being just up.

Sim. Good morrow to you, Mr. Modish, what ain't you well?

Mod. Thank you, thank you, only a little jaded or so after a fatiguing evening.

Sim. Oh! then, mayhap, as how you'll fetch a short walk wi' I afore breakfast?

Mod. That is according to the state of my nerves when I get up, good Simon.

Sim. Get up, why what do you mean, Mr. Modish, Are you going to bed again?

Mod. I hope so, my friend, for I have not been there as yet to night, I assure you.

Sim. The dickens presarve us, go to bed at seven o'clock in the morning; why, Mr. Modish, I always get up at five in the country, and I was fearful I had lain over late this morning.

Mod. Ha! ha! how little dost thou know of life! why now in the country I suppose you go to bed with the Sun, and rise with the lark,—never spend a sociable evening, I dare swear—never stir from home.

Sim. Never without axing leave of his worship.

Mod. Ha! ha! ha! just as I imagined; drag on life without a single taste of the pleasures it can afford.

Sim. Hold there, Mr. Modish, for match us if you can at the frolicks of a harvest home, or a May-day fair; the lads sing, and the lasses dance, and blind Sam does so twiddle up the catgut with his fiddle-stick—

Enter SIR GABRIEL in his Night-Cap and Morning-Gown.

Sir Gab. I wish I had it here to lay upon your skull, you prating rascal; go, go, and see for a barber to shave me and dress me, and if you don't know the way, ask one of the servants to shew you.

(Exit Simon).

Enter GEORGE with the Negus to MODISH, and Exit.

(MODISH rises, and presents the Glass to SIR GABRIEL).

Mod. Do me the honour to drink, Sir Gabriel.

Sir Gab. Drink ! Mr. Modish, no thank you, my constitution is sound, and so I mean to keep it ; I can account for the jaded faces I meet at this end of the town, if it is the fashion to begin drinking thus early in the morning ; but I suppose you term this night, and that a finishing glass.

Mod. Exactly so, Sir Gabriel ; to moisten my palate after the fatigue of talking scandal, flattering old-maids, back-biting my rivals, and bawling out, ‘ Seven’s the main,’—the girl of your heart, Sir Gabriel, (*drinks*).

Sir Gab. (*aside*) Familiar puppy. (*To him*) What then you play ?

Mod. I rattle the box occasionally, Sir Gabriel, but I am no favourite of fortune’s, the jade never smiles upon me ; I believe I shall soon forswear the dice.

Sir Gab. And my nephew, I suppose, rattles the box occasionally ?

Mod. Yes ! but with little better success than your humble servant ; fortune never set more than the shadow of a prize upon his cast, she once popped into his box the reversion of a minor’s fortune, whose father dying without a will, and some disputes arising amongst the relations as to his legitimacy, the entire property was lodged in the hands of the law.

Sir Gab. And if I had the authority to command it, he should have been lodged in bedlam ; for, in my opinion, it is a stain upon

rationality to suffer a man that will stake his all, upon which side of a little square bit of ivory, with black dots upon it, will come uppermost, to walk about at large.

Mod. Then, Sir Gabriel, you never play, I presume?

Sir Gab. Frequently for my amusement, and I take care never to put down a stake that shall defeat my end.

Mod. (aside). Ignorant bumpkin.

Sir Gab. And now a word or two with you about your master; Sir Frederick, I should have said, the other appellation, I suppose, offends your dignity?

Mod. Why true, Sir Gabriel, your nephew is pleased to consider me rather as a companion than a servant;—truth is, he finds me very adroit and useful to him in——

Sir Gab. Don't trouble yourself with an explanation, Mr. Modish, it does not require the brains of a Newton, to conceive wherein a young fellow, who sets up for a man of rank and fashion, may find very considerable advantages in possessing a man of your talents, (*aside*) and impudence.

Mod. Oh, Sir Gabriel, you compliment.

Sir Gab. Not at all, Mr. Modish,—now, in the first place, how did he get this title, this new name?

Mod. By the same means, Sir Gabriel, that many a name is got now a days,—by giving it to himself.

Sir Gab. But how does he support his dignity?—how does he contrive to live?

Mod. As many a man has done before him, by his wits.

Sir Gab. And keeps company of fashion?

Mod. Of the first in London.

Sir Gab. Why how did the dog manage to introduce himself?

Mod. Oh, Sir Gabriel, nothing so easy, only call on the first-rate people, leave your card, invite them shortly after to your house, entertain them handsomely, and lose your money with cheerfulness when you return the visit, and they will acknowledge you ever after for a man of ton.

Sir Gab. What the devil, then would you give me to understand, that the greater splendour a man lives in, the less pretensions he has to be thought a man of fortune?

Mod. Certainly, those who have money know its value too well, to fool it away; it's only those who have empty pockets, that make a show to lengthen their credit.

Sir Gab. What then my nephew, I suppose, is a little in the showy way at present, eh?

Mod. Why, Sir Gabriel, not absolutely, but a certain style of living requires certain expences, and——

Sir Gab. Pshaw! what signifies expence where every entertainment lengthens your credit. Come, order my breakfast, that may

give your credit an additional stretch, Mr. Modish. *(Exit).*

Mod. (calling off). George, carry Sir Gabriel's breakfast into the drawing-room; well done, old sentiment—however, let us but touch your cash at last, and we'll indulge you with food for criticism and raillery, to the extent of your wishes. *(Sir Frederick calls without, "George, George!")* So! Sir Frederick returned, seven to three as bare as myself.

Enter SIR FREDERICK.

Sir Fred. What, Modish! not yet in bed?

Mod. No, Sir Frederick, your uncle is just risen, and has been detaining me with——

Sir Fred. Nothing to my purpose, I dare swear, so drop the subject and attend to me; I have stumbled upon a wife with a fortune of twenty thousand pounds.

Mod. Or rather, I suppose, a virgin, whom you are to honour with that title. Pray who is the lady, Sir Frederick?

Sir Fred. The daughter of a broker, East of Temple Bar; Fretquil is his name; I never saw him, but I have heard that my father raised him to his present situation;—I was some evenings ago accidentally introduced to her mother, who is a woman of low manners, and no education, continually aping what she calls the *ton*, and as resolutely bent

on marrying her only daughter to a titled man, as her father is fixed on uniting her to a city-plodder.

Mod. Have you declared your passion?

Sir Fred. To her Mother,—Miss I look upon as a secondary personage in the affair; in fact I paid so little attention to her, that I hardly think I should recollect her person.

Mod. And how was your proposal received?

Sir Fred. With all the warmth I delivered it; the good woman stood six inches higher upon receiving the joyful intelligence, whilst incessant simpers seemed to betray the inward exclamation of—"my daughter to be a lady!"

Mod. Ha! ha! ha! well, proceed Sir Frederick.

Sir Fred. The story concludes with my having asked permission to visit my adorable this very morning, and the mother having granted it, with all imaginable complacency.

Mod. Bravo! bravo! Sir Frederick; this fortune will keep you above water seven years. What time do you go?

Sir Fred. At one.

Mod. Do you take a nap to night?

Sir Fred. No!

Mod. Nor I, still following your good example; but have you yet heard, what brings your uncle so unexpectedly to town, Sir Frederick?

Sir Fred. No, I have hardly seen him yet; he is always in bed when I am up, and I am always at rest, when he is stirring; our movements put me in mind of the man and woman in the Dutch weather-house.

Sir Gab. (speaking without) Oh, very well, then I'll go to him.

Mod. Oh! here he comes. I'm off (*going*).

Sir Fred. Hark you, not a word of my scheme.

Mod. Close, as a miser's strong box.

(*Exit Modish*).

Enter SIR GABRIEL.

Sir Fred. Good morrow, uncle; just awake, I imagine.

Sir Gab. Good evening, nephew, for you are just going to sleep, I suppose.

Sir Fred. No, indeed, uncle, I don't usually accustom myself to the vulgar habit of sleeping; thanks to my stars, I enjoy good health and spirits without it.

Sir Gab. Oh! then I suppose you will shortly leave off the vulgar habits of eating and drinking;—by all accounts, it would be a happy thing for you if you could compass that art; and now, sir, since you are not going to bed, and are probably not elsewhere engaged, as this is what you call an unfashionable hour to be seen abroad, will you favour me with a little conversation?

Sir Fred. Most readily, Sir Gabriel.

Sir Gab. Pray, Sir, give me leave to ask, if your father, one of the worthiest merchants that ever crossed the Exchange, was living, what apology could you have the face to offer him in defence of your present conduct?

Sir Fred. Upon my word, uncle, knowing him to be long dead, it is a subject I never gave a thought to.

Sir Gab. Did not he leave you an ample fortune, and establish you in one of the first houses in the city? where you might have obtained a reputable character, and had the inward satisfaction of knowing that you were increasing your patrimony in an honourable way?

Sir Fred. True, uncle, but at the expence of plodding from morning to night in a dark counting-room, mounted on a hard stool, with my knees crammed into my stomach, and a sharp desk thrust under my chin;—I don't know how it was, but I never could fancy myself any other than a criminal in the pillory, with the indulgence of a seat.

Sir Gab. Let me tell you, sir, that some of the men who pass the greatest part of their time in that pillory, as you are pleased to term it, are the ablest contributors towards the support and honour of this kingdom. Was not it to toiling in that pillory, that your father was indebted for thirty thousand pounds?

Sir Fred. True, uncle, and I, to show my gratitude to the world from which he amassed it, have liberally sent my share of it into circulation again.

Sir Gab. And what have you got by it?

Sir Fred. A knowledge of the world.

Sir Gab. That is to say, it has duped you, and now, at the expence of your health, morals, and character, you have set out full gallop on a scheme of retaliation; and satisfied with sacrificing yourself, you must pervert even the order of nature; racketing all night, and in bed all day; breakfasting by moonlight, and dining with candles at nine o'clock—Zounds! why is not two just as good an hour?

Sir Fred. So it is, Sir Gabriel, to day, and seven may be a better the next day, and five the day after; in short, whatever time a man finds himself inclined for eating, I think to be the best; I cannot boast the vulgar appetite of a mechanic, who never eats but at a fixed hour, and never drinks but when it is so much o'clock.

Sir Gab. Why you incorrigible——but I'll waste my breath no longer on your obstinacy——Do you remember that you ever had a sister?

Sir Fred. Mrs. Sedley, Sir Gabriel?

Sir Gab. Oh! you do retain your memory; I had understood that it was fashionable to

lose it, but I presume it is one of those companions that is oftener wished absent than found so :—then perhaps you may also recollect that she took a trip to Scotland, with a profligate gamester like yourself, when she was only seventeen, and was forbidden by her father to return.

Sir Fred. And they then, I think, secreted themselves in Westmoreland till his death.

Sir Gab. Which is now five years ago ; they afterwards went abroad, taking with them the three thousand pounds I prevailed on her father on his death-bed to bequeath her.

Sir Fred. And there they are still, I suppose.

Sir Gab. No, Sir, they are now in this city, and that brings me into it ; I have had a letter from my niece, informing me that they are returned to London in great poverty, imploring my pardon, and asking my compassion for her child.

Sir Fred. Then you mean to assist them, Sir Gabriel ?

Sir Gab. She has been imprudent, but her child must not starve on her account ; I will relieve their immediate want, but till I have satisfied myself in a particular I wish to learn, they shall not know who is their benefactor, mark that, so at your peril don't you hint to her at my——

Sir Fred. Oh dear! Sir Gabriel, I dare say I shall not see her.

Sir Gab. Not see her! your own sister in indigence and misery, and you not to see her—If your father was alive, and could see you here, dubbed with a false title, and stuck out like a—but if your own heart don't lead you to her, I am sure my words will be of no avail,—not see her!—why you uncivilized—no, I am wrong, you are very civilized, it is the prerogative of fashion to be unfeeling.

Sir Fred. Nay, nay, Sir Gabriel, don't be so impatient, I'll consider the matter, and perhaps I may send her my address in the course of the week (*rings*).

Enter GEORGE.

Sir Fred. Carry up chocolate into my dressing-room.

Geo. Directly, Sir Frederick (*going*).

Sir Fred. And, George, you may add some ice-creams and macaroones; go (*exit George*). Sir Gabriel, you'll excuse me for the present (*bows slightly, and exits*).

Sir Gab. Not see her! an unfeeling puppy, to keep open house for all fashionable gamblers and pickpockets, and throw away thousands in giving them entertainments, and not to offer an asylum, or even a dinner, to a starving sister.

Enter SIMON.

Sim. The barber's come, your worship, and quite another guess sort of a man he is, your worship, from Bobby Razor down in our town; he jabbers French, your honor, and looks like a——

Sir Gab. A puppy, I suppose; so let's hear no more about him; stay, don't go away——it shall go in a blank cover (*takes out a bank-note, and folds it up in a sheet of paper as a letter, and writes*) Mrs. Sedley, No. 2, Duke-Street (*wafers it*); there, enquire the way to the penny-post, and put in that, and be sure you take care of it.

Sim. Yes, your honor; but, your honor, if I might just speak a word or two to your honor, this same barber be a mighty civil-spoken man, your honor, and he axed I my name, and I told him, and he said, damme, says he, I guessed it was Simon by your eye, says he; and so we shook hands, and he said, says he, speaking very sociably, your honor—my friend, says he, I think if his worship was willing, a dust of powder would become your locks mightily, says he——

Sir Gab. Powder indeed! get along, or I'll dust your jacket for you, you sapskull, I will.
(*Exeunt*).

SCENE SECOND—A ROOM AT MR. FRET-
QUIL'S.

Enter MR. and MRS. FRETQUIL.

Mrs. Fretq. Mr. Fretquil, you shall hear me ; you shall hear reason.

Fretq. Can you talk it, Mrs. Fretquil?

Mrs. Fretq. Can you understand it, Mr. Fretquil?

Fretq. It is a fair question, for your conduct has gone nigh to derange my senses.

Mrs. Fretq. Then circulate the report, and do your endeavour to get it believed ; I promise you it will redound to your honour, for none of your friends, that I am acquainted with, ever yet gave you credit for possessing any.

Fretq. Ah, my dear, I never committed but one foolish action in my life, and you take care to remind me of it every time I see you.

Mrs. Fretq. Why, you ungrateful man ! when you ought to look upon the day that gave you such a wife as me, as the happiest of your life ;—Don't I consult your inclination and ease in every respect ? Don't I even take the trouble of speaking, acting and thinking for yourself, off your hands ?

Fretq. True, my dear, but I could often willingly spare you the pains.

Mrs. Fretq. Don't I ask your advice upon every occasion ?

Fretq. Yes ; but you might just as well wave the compliment, for it is not one time in twenty that you will hear it, or one in five hundred that you will take it.

Mrs. Fretq. And why? Why, but because I am always in the right, and you never are ; now for instance, your mean, groveling spirit would throw away your daughter upon some huge, clumsy cit, in preference to giving her hand to Sir Frederick Floricourt.

Fretq. And what do you suppose Sir Frederick wants her hand for, but because of her huge, clumsy, city fortune? Whenever any of your west-end of the town quality come a courting into the city, depend upon it, it is a sure sign of an empty purse, and weak credit.

Mrs. Fretq. Vulgar prejudices ! Mr Fretquill, vulgar prejudices !

Fretq. Besides, Harriot's eyes tell me plainly that her inclination has not been consulted in the affair.

Mrs. Fretq. And why should she be allowed an indulgence that was not granted to her mother?—My inclination never was consulted, I am sure, Mr. Fretquill.

Fretq. Ay, my dear, you once confessed to me, I was the only offer you ever had.

Mrs. Fretq. No, sir, I am the weak woman that refused nine good offers, to take up at last with you ; but I am determined my daughter shan't do the same, and repent it

all her life after, like her mother before her ;
so I shall go to her directly, and tell her that
I am resolved on making her Lady Floricourt.
(Exit).

Fretq. Oh ! what Nine happy men has my
wife made ! what would I give to have been
the Tenth !

Enter THOMAS.

Tho. There's a gentlewoman wants to
speak with you, sir.

Fretq. To me, Thomas, what does she
want ? a gentlewoman ! Do you know her ?

Tho. No, sir, but I think I have seen her
before.

Fretq. Somebody upon business, I sup-
pose ; well, show her into my little parlour
at the back of the counting-room, Thomas ;
but I am sure I don't know any gentlewoman
that can want me, Thomas, not I !

(Exit after Thomas).

SCENE THE THIRD—A PARLOUR.

Enter THOMAS, introducing MRS. JENKINS.

Tho. My master will be here directly,
ma'am.

Enter MR. FRETQUIL.

Fretq. (speaks as he enters). Well, good
woman !

Mrs. Jenk. Your servant, your worship.

Fretq. (*surprised and stammering*). Oh! what you are come about the papers again, are you? Well, stop a minute (*crosses*); here, Thomas, I believe I owe you half a guinea, don't I? I'll pay you whilst I remember it (*gives him money*). I say, Thomas, you may keep it, but have an eye to the door, there's a good lad, and if my wife should ask for me, I am just stepped out (*exit Thomas*). Well, Mrs. Jenkins, what's the news with you?

Mrs. Jenk. I hope your worship won't take it amiss my calling, but it is such a time since I have seen your worship!

Fretq. Aye, Mrs. Jenkins, true enough, I seldom come your way now.

Mrs. Jenk. Seldom, indeed, your worship! I hope your worship has been pretty well all this long time?

Fretq. Tolerable, Mrs. Jenkins, tolerable; how have you been?

Mrs. Jenk. Indifferent, thank your worship. These are but bad times; but, thank Heaven, I have let my lodgings again at last.

Fretq. Well, hey! to some nice, tender—

Mrs. Jenk. Beautiful as an angel, your worship, and the poor creature does seem so unhappy, and takes on so, she makes my heart bleed to see her tears, often and often, your worship.

Fretq. Indeed! poor thing! poor thing!

Mrs. Jenk. And so I thought your worship might like perhaps just to step in, and——

Fretq. Aye, and just ask her how she does, and pity her misfortunes, and——

Mrs. Jenk. Yes, your worship; but I hope I can depend on your worship's discretion, for I verily believe her as modest as a May-flower.

Fretq. Aye, poor soul, I dare say; but I never stir from home now a days, Mrs. Jenkins; I begin to like my own fire-side best.

Mrs. Jenk. Mine is a warm room, if your worship would condescend to take a cup of tea there this afternoon, your worship.

Fretq. I never go further than Change.

Mrs. Jenk. The hour's your own, your worship.

Fretq. I do now and then go to my club about seven o'clock, but that's later than your tea-time.

Mrs. Jenk. Ay, that will be a very good time, your worship, because then I can almost say for certain her husband will be out; he mostly goes out about that time of the evening.

Fretq. What, is she married?

Mrs. Jenk. Yes, your worship, and vastly poor they seem.

Fretq. Aye, I suppose some make-believe—

Mrs. Jenk. No, indeed, your worship; she vowed to me it was in holy wedlock, I assure your worship;—dear your worship, I would not harbour an indifferent woman for the

world—I am very particular, indeed, in regard to the quality of my lodgers, and the credit of my house, your worship.

Fretq. I dare say—no!—it looks like rain, the wind is come about to the South, I don't think I shall go out this evening.

Mrs. Jenk. I hope your worship will excuse the liberty I took in——

Fretq. Oh dear, aye, to be sure, Mrs. Jenkins,—and so her husband is generally out about the time you mentioned?

Mrs. Jenk. Yes, your worship.

Fretq. Poor thing!—Well, if I should go to my club, I may call in, but don't expect me.

Mrs. Jenk. Good morrow, your worship.

Fretq. Good morrow, Mrs. Jenkins; Thomas, open the door—about Seven, you say?

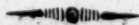
Mrs. Jenk. Yes, your worship.

Fretq. Aye, I shan't come, don't expect me,—the back-door stands where it did, I suppose?

Mrs. Jenk. Yes, your worship.

Fretq. Ay, very well,—but I shan't come, don't expect me,—don't expect me.

(Exeunt severally.)



END OF THE FIRST ACT.

The Second Act.

SCENE THE FIRST—A ROOM AT MR. FRET-
QUIL'S.

Enter MR. FRETQUIL and HARRIOT

Fretq. **NAY**, nay, Harriot, don't be too hard upon your mother, she wishes you happy, I dare say, only she wishes to have you happy in her own way.

Har. Then, sir, how mistaken is her idea, that happiness can be the result of a union between two hearts severally swayed by pride and aversion ;—true felicity can be the fruit only of souls strongly cemented by the purest affection.

Fretq. Your spark's affection, my girl, I fancy, is of a much purer nature than you suppose ; for it is my opinion, that nothing less than my pure gold will content him.

Har. Be assured, sir, his motives are mean and interested ; the cold indifference with which he has treated me, during our short acquaintance, has thoroughly convinced me, that no preference he feels for me has induced him to seek this alliance.

Fretq. Have you opened your mind to your mother ?

Har. I have endeavoured to explain to her, her error in regard to the step she is so resolutely bent on taking ; but she treats my arguments with contempt, and styles them vulgar prejudices, which, she says, I shall soon learn to correct.

Fretq. Aye, she means when you become a lady of fashion.

Har. And if I am to gain that name at the expence of my reason, I hope I shall never have the slightest pretensions to it ; —and now, sir, I have to request of you, that you will lend me your assistance in the execution of an innocent stratagem, the success of which, I trust, will free me from Sir Frederick's persecutions.

Fretq. Any thing but speaking to your mother ; for I know it is wearing my lungs to no purpose.

Har. Then, sir, will you have the goodness, upon the first opportunity I shall find suited to my purpose, to feign yourself a bankrupt ?—I am well aware of Sir Frederick's mercenary views, and I flatter myself, that this intelligence aptly conveyed, will make him bid us an eternal farewell.

Fretq. Pshaw, child, that can never do, the feint can't last for ever, and when your mother finds it out, she will send for him back depend upon it, and we are made fools for our pains.

Har. All I can answer is, that there are certain prepossessions of success in our favourite schemes, that sometimes seize upon the heart,—such are my present feelings: give me your consent, and I am armed to face the enemy.

Fretq. It is a foolish plan; but, however, any scheme must carry with it a greater probability of success than could possibly be expected, from endeavouring to change the opinion of my wife.

Enter MRS. FRETQUIL.

Mrs. Fretq. What's that about your wife, sir? I cannot think, Mr. Fretquil, what business you have in my parlour in a morning; do I ever come into the counting-room to interrupt you?

Fretq. No, my dear, never; and I have often said, it was the quietest room in the house. *(Exit.)*

Mrs. Fretq. And now, pray miss, What has been the result of your's and your father's wise consultations? Are you hardened in your obstinacy?

Har. If you refer to Sir Frederick's proposal, madam, I am ready to receive it from his own lips.

Mrs. Fretq. Oh! oh! your eyes are opened at last, are they, miss? and your father too is convinced, I suppose, that I am in the right for once.

Har. Believe me, madam, my sentiments with regard to Sir Frederick are not in the slightest degree changed, and it is in conformity to your wish, not to any idea of my own happiness, that I now consent to listen to him.

Mrs. Fretq. Happiness, indeed! why the girl don't know what happiness is! shall not you have a title, servants, equipage, pin-money, jewels, plate, and a box at the opera? What would you have more?

Har. Do you not think then, madam, that a union of sentiment and reciprocal affection are necessary ingredients, in the composition of happiness, in the married state?

Mrs. Fretq. No, child, I am convinced of the contrary—Am not I a happy wife? and I am sure your father and I have not thought twice alike since we have been married.

(*Exit.*)

Har. How doubly beneficial will the success of this stratagem prove! by exposing the mercenary views of Sir Frederick, and putting to the test the affection of my Henry!—my Henry! alas! how eager are we to realize in imagination our fondest wishes!—Can I suppose that my father will ever submit to receive his clerk, a youth entirely dependent on his bounty, as the husband of his daughter?—or, Am I certain he loves me?—He has never declared his passion;—modesty has tied his tongue, but love

has beamed from his eyes ;—he's here, now let me for awhile steel my heart.

Enter HENRY.

Hen. I beg pardon, madam, I thought Mr. Fretquil had been here. *(going.)*

Har. What, Henry, are you going away without congratulating me on my approach to a title?

Hen. (returning) No, Madam ;—I—I had flattered myself that the report which had reached my ears was without foundation.

Har. And why, Henry, should you have formed a wish in opposition to my interest?

Hen. If you think the title of Lady Floricourt would be conducive to it, I sincerely congratulate you.

Har. They, whose happiness my welfare constitutes, have delivered it as their opinion, and it is the duty of a daughter to yield submission.

Hen. But would it not, madam, be equally a breach of duty to bestow a hand without a heart?

Har. Why should you suppose that to be my case ?—I don't understand you.

Hen. Pardon me, I meant that your short acquaintance with Sir Frederick—but I am too presumptuous, and will retire. *(going.)*

Har. No, stay, Henry, I beg of you to proceed—What was it you were going to say?

Hen. Only, madam, from your mode of expression, I conjectured that duty had operated upon you more forcibly than inclination in favour of Sir Frederick.

Hen. Whatever I feel to be a duty, Henry, I endeavour to unite with inclination,

Hen. Your reasonings defeat my weaker arguments. You are an angel, and may you be as happy as you are deserving.

(Boxes, and exit.)

Har. How difficult a task is it to conceal those sentiments the heart struggles to avow.— Oh! Henry, that my will alone were wanting to undeceive and make thee happy. I have often imagined, that the pleasure with which I received the ballad he composed for me, must have discovered to him the state of my heart; and, oh! of how feeling a heart must he be possessed, who wrote the fate of poor Rosa.

B A L L A D.

I.

Where yon cot humbly leans to the mountain's proud
side,
And the stream at its foot gently rolls its soft tide,
Where the flocks are seen browsing the flowrets
among,
And the shepherd at even chaunts out his rude song :
Oh! whene'er there you wander disdain not to hear
The fate of a damsel, for whom the fond tear
Of each villager flows, when he tells the sad tale
Of the woes of poor Rosa, the maid of the vale.

II.

Fair Rosa was once her fond parent's delight,
While the transports of innocence made her heart
light,
Till love, fatal passion! stole into her breast,
And forbade the poor Rosa again to know rest:
A youth from the town all attractive and gay,
With false looks and false words, her affections did
sway,
He swore, and she listen'd, alas! to the tale
That beguiled poor Rosa, the maid of the vale.

III.

The spoiler no sooner had won her fond heart,
Than he broke through those bonds he had vow'd
ne'er to part,
He fled in sad triumph, and left the poor maid—
To bewail the sad fortune of virtue betray'd;
Heart-broken she wander'd o'er wilds and thro' dells,
Her days pass'd on heaths, and her nights in dark
cells,
And when frantic and dying, she sung forth the tale,
Of the woes of poor Rosa, the maid of the vale.

Enter MR. FRETQUIL.

Fretq. Here, Harriot, I have just received
a letter which, by the by, ought to have
come yesterday, to tell me that my orphan
niece—Emma, will arrive in town this very
day by the Exeter coach.

Har. Indeed! poor girl! we must endea-
vour to render her situation as pleasant as, I
dare say, she pictures it to herself; I hope the
idea of coming to this city, of which she

spoke in such raptures when we saw her last year in Devonshire, will lighten her grief for her father's death.

Fretq. Oh! child, Emma is barely seventeen, and in such youthful hearts, sorrow is powerful, but not lasting: however do you take care to instruct her in the necessary rules for a town life, and as I suppose she comes piping hot for a husband, but I dare say is too innocent to think of entertaining two suitors at the same time; I'll give her a lover at home to keep her from forming any improper attachment abroad.—What think you now, will not Henry make her a good husband? If I give them something to set them up in the world?

Har. Mr. Maitland—is—certainly—a very deserving young man, sir!—but Emma is still so very young.

Fretq. Pshaw, child, that's a fault that will mend, and Henry is but one and twenty; besides, you know, they need not marry just yet, they may be only getting towards it for the present;—yes, yes, I think it will do nicely.

Har. You are the best judge, sir. (*Aside*) Oh! Henry, art thou then destined for another!

Fretq. Well, now go and carry this letter to your mother, and tell her my intentions, and be ready to receive Emma kindly, go.

Har. Certainly, sir.

Fretq. Aye, go, make haste ; don't let her catch us together in her parlour again (*exit Harriot*). Well, now I think I have managed this nicely for my niece, and it will settle Henry comfortably too ; I'll take the first opportunity to give him a hint of my plan.

Enter THOMAS.

Tho. A note, sir!

Fretq. Does any body wait for an answer?

Tho. No, sir. (*Exit.*)

Fretq. (reads) To Mr. Fretquil, Esq. (*opens and reads*) "An it please your worship"—oh! ho! from Mrs. Jenkins—"An it please your worship, this cometh to let your worship know, that if you could come just now to my house and be very *discre-*
tious, there is no one within but I and the lady, nor I fancy won't be o'some time. Your worship's very humble servant, till death,
Dorothy Jenkins."

"N. B. I humbly thought this time o'day might suit your worship best."

Pshaw! what a foolish woman! to send when I told her I should not come,—besides I have to go to my friend Allbutt's about the insurance on his vessel for Lisbon, and then (*looking at his watch*)—no!—it will be rather too soon for Change,—I shall have about half an hour to spare—but then she lives

such a way from Allbutt's—no ! no,—I shan't go,—and yet a walk may be good for my constitution. *(Exit.)*

SCENE THE SECOND—A PARLOUR.

MRS. SEDLEY *discovered at work.*

Mrs. Sed. What can so long detain Mr. Sedley ?—In my present unhappy situation, every moment's delay beyond the time I expect him raises within me the most painful anguish,—I tremble when I think in what difficulties his passion for play may involve him ; that fatal passion which still maintains dominion over him, though it has stripped us of every earthly comfort !—no ! not of all—it hath left us the wretch's greatest comfort, hope !—But of what ?—from my uncle, since his neglect of my letter, I despair of obtaining relief !—my brother, no enquiries can discover.—Who our unknown benefactor is, perhaps we shall never learn ; likely some charitable man, that in the distribution of his bounty, hath known some cause to think on us, and ne'er will do so more !—Hark ! my husband's knock. *(Exit hastily.)*

Enter MRS. JENKINS *and* MR. FRETQUIL.

Mrs. Jenk. Step in, your worship, step in, the lady is not here, she is just gone to look after her child, your worship, I dare say,—it always goes to sleep about this time of the day.

Fretq. Ah, I don't much like intruding into this lady's room, Mrs. Jenkins ; it looks so impertinent.

Mrs. Jenk. Oh dear, no, your worship, there is nothing in it, under the purtence I shall make, your worship.

Fretq. That is as she takes it, and then if one is not civilly received, one looks so silly—but here she comes.

Enter MRS. SEDLEY.

Mrs. Sed. No ! I was deceived.

(Seeing Mr. Fretquil, she curtsies).

Mrs. Jen. I beg pardon, ma'am, for bringing in this here gentleman, ma'am, but he is a very respectable gentleman, that has often hired my lodgings, ma'am, and he came to enquire after them now, ma'am ; but I told him you had taken them, and so I made bold just to bring him in here, ma'am, till I stept to my neighbour's, Mrs. Bandbox, the milliner's, to enquire whether her's are at liberty, ma'am.

Fretq. (aside) Dear ! dear ! what a sweet creature !——I think I had better not stay.

Mrs. Jenk. He's a corn-factor out of Kent, ma'am.

Mrs. Sed. Pray take a chair, sir, till Mrs. Jenkins returns.

Fretq. (bowing) ma'am. *aside* Oh ! what a melodious voice she has

Mrs. Jenk. For about three weeks, I think you say, sir?

Fretq. Yes, but I'll not trouble you to go all that way, Mrs.——

Mrs. Jenk. Oh dear, sir!

Fretq. No! no! well, but if you will go—
(*Whispering*) have an eye to her husband's coming in. (*Aloud*) I won't give more, Mrs. Jenkins.

Mrs. Jenk. And a very handsome price too, sir!
(*Curtsies and exit.*)

Mrs. Sed. Pray, sir, sit down.

Fretq. Ma'am.

(*Mrs. Sedley seats herself at a table near the flat scene, and begins sewing—Fretquil places himself on a chair near the front of the stage; during the following scene, Fretquil is continually drawing his chair nearer to Mrs. Sedley.*)

Fretq. (*aside*) I shall never be able to speak first, she looks so modest and so bewitching, and yet so awful;—I can't remember a word I was going to say—(*a pause*) I will speak to her, hem! hem! (*To her*) A fine day to day, ma'am. (*Aside*) The ice is broken, however.

Mrs. Sed. Sir!

Fretq. Ma'am!

Mrs. Sed. I believe you made an observation relative to the weather, sir!

Fretq. Yes, ma'am, yes; warm weather for the season, I said, ma'am.

Mrs. Sed. I thought otherwise, sir, but my sedentary habits may have led me into a false opinion.

Fretq. Say rather, ma'am, that I, under the influence of your solar charms, may have formed a wrong—that is, I mean, ma'am, a partial opinion of the atmosphere. (*Aside.*) Adad, well said, Tony.

Mrs. Sed. I beg pardon, sir, I did not understand——

Fretq. (aside) How provoking, to make such a fine compliment, and not to be understood—no great proof of her sense! (*To her*) I simply meant, that I almost fancy you are the Sun that has inspired me with Summer heat. (*A pause.*)——(*Aside*) Hum! silence is not always a bad sign, take courage, and go on, Tony. (*To her*) Adad, this is very nice work, but what a pity those delicate, pretty, little, tapering, delicious fingers, should be pricked with that filthy needle!

Mrs. Sed. It is a friend, sir, to whom I am indebted for many obligations, and those who have their subsistence to earn, must not be too nice as to the delicacy of their appearance.

Fretq. (rising). Now here's a ring, a bauble, a toy, oh! that I might grace it by placing it on one of those white fingers.

Mrs. Sed. (rising). If you mean to insult my situation, sir, remember that poverty is

proud; if your intentions are dishonourable, know that I wear a ring whose sacredness shall never be prophaned by such a rival.

Fretq. Nay, nay, sweet creature, don't be offended, I pity your distresses and would relieve them.

Mrs. Sed. At the expence of my feelings and domestic happiness; I see your charitable motives, sir!

Fretq. Now don't be so hasty, here are twenty guineas, and for one single kiss.

Mrs. Sed. No, sir, an unsinking fund should not purchase the momentary dishonour of an unsuspecting husband; therefore leave me—Oh, Charles! To what unforeseen perplexities does one ungovernable vice expose your unhappy wife.

Fretq. Well then, sweet angel, if that's the case, why should you not seek your own private happiness—

Mrs. Sed. I insure it, sir, by despising your offers; if my husband is unwary in his conduct, it is my duty to be doubly circumspect in mine; therefore leave me, sir,——I command you to leave me.

Fretq. (*taking her hand*). One moment, sweet angel——suffer me to——to——

Mrs. Sed. Desist, sir, or my cries——

Fretq. Hush! hush! my dear——

Mrs. Sed. Ah! (*shrieks.*)

Enter Mrs. JENKINS.

Mrs. Jen. Oh, gracious! what's the matter? Are you ill, ma'am?

Mrs. Sed. I shall be better when you have insisted on that person's leaving the house.

(Exit.)

Mrs. Jenk. There, your worship,—I told your worship, how it would be, if your worship was *obstropolous*.

Fretq. *Obstropolous!* why I am sure the twinkling of her eyes looked as if she would not mind a kiss.

Mrs. Jenk. Oh! your worship, there is no judging of that; I have a twinkling of the eyes myself, your worship; but I assure you, I am for no man's liking.

Fretq. No, no, I never thought you were, Mrs. Jenkins—well, good morning.

Mrs. Jenk. I hope it won't be so long as it has been before I see your worship again. The back door is open, your worship—nobody will see your worship.

Fretq. They had not need, for methinks an old man detected in his galantries cuts but a foolish figure, particularly when he has been baulked in his expectations. *(Exit.)*

Mrs. Jenk. So!—a pretty kettle of fish his worship will have got me into with my new lodgers, I suppose.—I am sure I never thought he had spirit enough to be rude to

any lady, especially such a modest one, for he never attempted the smallest freedom with me, and I can safely say, I never was over coy with him. *(Exit.)*

Enter MRS. SEDLEY.

Mrs. Sed. What an innumerable string of evils flow from a union unsanctioned by consenting parents!—hard that our choice should be restrained in the election of a man whom we are to call by the tenderest of epithets, and teach our children to revere as the best of men!—or, if we fix it unadvised, that it should oft be followed by a father's curse! But my father retracted his malediction on his death-bed, and his repentance shall seal my tongue from reproach.—I fear this woman is concerned with the man who insulted me; there is something in her manner that, from the first of our residence here, has made me look upon her with a doubtful eye;—I am apprehensive of informing Mr. Sedley of what has happened, lest the warmth of his temper should put him upon measures of revenge, that in the end might prove prejudicial to ourselves. It were better, if I could prevail on him to quit these lodgings from some other cause.—Thank Heaven, he is here.

Enter SEDLEY.

Sed. My Clara! *(embraces her.)*

Mrs. Sed. You have been long absent, my love!

Sed. I have been taking my accustomed walk,—but how is this, Clara, you have been weeping?

Mrs. Sed. The memory of past times will often draw forth an unbidden tear, but your presence checks its progress.

Sed. Amiable woman! I have been repeating my enquiries relative to your brother, Hardyne; but I am unable to gain the slightest intelligence concerning him.

Mrs. Sed. It is strange; he surely must have left this city—but I have been thinking, my love, that as we must now, I fear, begin to despair of any assistance from my uncle, and must therefore inevitably place our sole dependance on our own endeavours—I by my needle, you by whatever reputable occupation shall best suit your inclination; it were better to remove to a less expensive lodging, in some obscure part of the city.

Sed. Nay, my love, we still may have hope from your uncle.

Mrs. Sed. We may; but let us not confide in it to our undoing; let us, I entreat you, while yet we have the means, pursue the plan I have proposed;—the twenty pounds we this morning received in a blank cover, will defray our present debts; give me the money, and I'll pay Mrs. Jenkins her de-

mand, whilst you go in search of another abode.

Sed. I think——

Mrs. Sed. What? do you disapprove of my plan?—speak.

Sed. No! no!—I—

Mrs. Sed. Why then do you hesitate to give me the money?

Sed. (after a pause). Because I am a worthless villain, and have it not to give you.

Mrs. Sed. Oh, Mr. Sedley!—have you again been rashly courting your destruction at the gaming-table?—What madness could tempt you thus to waste the slender pittance, friendly chance had sent you to preserve the lives of your unhappy wife and child? surely, some fiend in malice to mankind, first in the human breast implanted that destructive vice!

Sed. Do not despair, my Clara; I should have many friends in this city; I will endeavour to see them, and implore their compassion.

Mrs. Sed. Friends! that like leaves in Autumn, fly off in numbers at each adverse gale that blows upon the trunk to which they once adhered;—No, my Sedley! you shall not brave the scoffs of those from whose acquaintance you perhaps have too just cause to date your ruin!—It is grating to become the suppliant unto those who once have been the solicitors of our parent's bounty; but for

your's and my child's sake, I will condescend even to this.

Sed. What means, my Clara?

Mrs. Sed. Briefly this; I remember to have heard my father mention a broker in the city, a Mr. Fretquil, who was indebted to him for his rise from an humble situation in life, to the one he now sustains; I never saw him, but surely were I to make myself known to him, he could not, in his present affluent condition, refuse a small gratuity to the child of his benefactor.

Sed. How will you find him?

Mrs. Sed. The residence of a man in his line of life, may, I am sure, be easily learnt in any public-room near the Exchange, and this, my love, must be your immediate business.

Sed. I fly—but can you forgive me, Clara?

Mrs. Sed. Oh, Sedley!—that your conduct might but in future be such as to render that question unnecessary!

Sed. To promise amendment is but to mock, when promises have oft been broken—did you ever doubt my love for you, Clara?

Mrs. Sed. Never! witness Heaven!

Sed. Then witness, Heaven! my resolution to forsake that vice which has hitherto led to my undoing, shall be as firmly kept as is the faith I pledged to you at the altar.

Mrs. Sed. Good angels, register the vow, and grant it sacred! (*Exeunt severally.*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

The Third Act.

SCENE THE FIRST—A ROOM AT FRETQUIL'S.

Enter HARRIOT and EMMA.

Har. THERE now, don't you think I have equipped you with taste?

Emma. I never was so smart in all my born days;—oh! if old aunt Winny could see me, how she would exclaim against the vanity and vexation of the times! But now we are at last alone, dear cousin, wish me joy of having got away from old aunt Winny, and trees, and fields, and hedges, and such nonsense, to dear enchanting London.

Har. How can you speak in such extacies of a place you have scarcely entered, and consequently can have no just idea of the satisfaction which you imagine is to result to you from living in it?

Emma. Now, cousin, as if I could not tell without seeing, how much pleasanter it must be to live here, and walk about the city, and see the shops, and smart men, and coaches and things, than to live in the country, moped up with a cat, and a dog, and an old maiden aunt, and such stupid animals.

Har. So far are my sentiments the reverse

of yours, Emma, that I know no pleasure equal to making one in a sociable party round a country fire.

Emma. What, live in the country?—lud! cousin, you would die of the vapours.

Har. That I should suppose to be the last complaint the free country air would inspire me with;—why, I should have imagined it a thing out of the question for you, Emma, even to have known the name.

Emma. Name! cousin!—that's all there is to be known about them, ain't it?—why to be sure you must know it is all make-believe when fine ladies sob and sigh, and peak about like sick turkey-poults, and say they have got the vapours.

Har. Indeed, Emma, you must not suffer your spirits to run away with you thus, now you have got into the great world.

Emma. Oh! no fear of their lasting long, cousin; uncle says he is going to tame them with a husband!—Oh dear! what sort of a man is this Henry?—Is he a very proper man, cousin?

Har. He is one, Emma, in whom every amiable quality is centered, and if you espouse him, I doubt not but he will prove to you a kind and indulgent husband.

Emma. I'll tell you what, I'll make him take me all about to see the shows; I never saw a Lion in my life, and I am dying for the

sight; and I want to see a Duke too; in short, I don't care which I see first, but I'll see them both in their turns.

Har. We have plenty of time before us, and rest assured you shall see every thing worthy your observation.

Emma. Oh, lord, and then we can ride in your coach, when you are Lady—Lady—what is the man's hard name?

Har. Floricourt; but come, let us go into the drawing-room, he'll be here presently, and then you'll see a Sir to begin with.

Emma. I dare say he is a rare fellow, oh! it is such an enchanting name, he must be a handsome man!—Oh! but cousin, I want to ask you a question, Is not this market-day in London?

Har. No, Emma, every day is alike here.

Emma. What! every day such a delightful noise and bustle, and croud?

Har. Yes.

Emma. Oh, lud, I have heard aunt Winny say, that London was just like a fair; but by gemini, our fairs down in the West, that last but a day, ain't worth a cracked cherry-stone to this that lasts all the year round. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE THE SECOND—A PARLOUR.

Enter FRETQUIL and THOMAS.

Fretq. Go into the counting-room, and tell Henry Maitland to come to me (*exit Tho-*

mas). I have told Emma, that I have got a husband for her, and now I'll inform Henry of his good fortune: poor lad, he has been very melancholy lately, I suppose it proceeds from his uncertain situation, but this intelligence will cheer him at once.

Enter HENRY.

Henry, I have been thinking a good deal about you of late; you have been a very good lad, since you have lived with me.

Hen. You are very kind to say so, sir.

Fretq. Six years you have been one of my family, and I now think as you have no friend in the world but myself, it is time I should do something for you.

Hen. Oh, sir! I already owe you my warmest gratitude, and your increasing goodness can only augment a debt I can never repay.

Fretq. Pshaw! pshaw! tell me, Henry, was you ever in love?

Hen. Sir—I—I——

Fretq. Oh, what it takes you some time to turn over the leaves of that account-book, does it?

Hen. Sir, it would ill become a dependant like myself to dare to aspire to any connection, suitable to that rank in which you have kindly suffered me to live; to disgrace the situation in which you have placed me by an inferior alliance, I will carefully avoid.

Fretq. Well, come, I'll put a plainer question to you ; Should you have any objection to marrying a nice girl with a handsome fortune ?

Hen. I can have no doubt, sir, of the excellence of your choice for me, but excuse my saying, that I should think it a breach of honor and duty, to marry a woman on whom I could not place my affections.

Fred. You are right, you are right ; but my life on't you will like this girl, I know you will—she is rather a rough diamond at present, but I am sure you'll find, that she'll take a brilliant polish in a little time.

Hen. May I enquire the lady's name, and place of abode, sir ?

Fretq. Aye, to be sure you may, her name is Fretquil, and her abode is at present my house.

Hen. Indeed ! sir ?

Fretq. Aye, indeed, sir, I thought it would please you ; you are inspired already.

Hen. But, sir, should the lady's inclination not——

Fretq. I am sure she'll like you, I am sure she will ; I'll go and fetch her directly, and then you know, when the first interview is over, we shall all be out of suspense. (*Exit.*)

Hen. Is this really so, or have my senses deceived me ? Is Harriot to be mine, and at the desire of her father ?—Why then did she

not contradict the rumour of her intended union with Sir Frederick? Oh! bliss unequalled, unexpected!

Enter FRETQUIL and EMMA.

Fretq. There, there she is, Emma Fretquil, my niece, and as merry a girl as ever wore shoes.

Emma. Aye, that I am, uncle. (*Aside.*) I am sure, my husband that is to be, looks sulky enough.

Hen. Heavens and earth!

Fretq. Well, is not she a fine girl?—Oh! what you are struck dumb with joy, are you? Ah! I see you like her.

Hen. She is very handsome, sir.

Fretq. Aye, aye, you'll find out the rest of her good qualities in time;—there, now get acquainted together, and so on; but remember, I don't intend you should marry yet this year or two. (*Exit.*)

Hen. Oh, what a situation is mine! what an unlooked-for reverse of fortune! (*aside.*)

Emma. (*aside*) Well, I wonder he don't speak,—he is a good-looking man enough, and I think I like him well enough, but he is so glum;—perhaps I ought to speak first, and tell him I won't have him; I have heard that London ladies always hold out a long while. (*To him.*) Indeed, sir, I don't exactly know yet, sir; but, I believe, sir, I can't have you.

Hen. Are you serious in what you say, madam? perhaps some prior attachment may have——(*aside*) Would to Heaven it might be so.

Emma (aside). Now what shall I say to him? I am sure I won't tell him I never had a sweetheart, if I tell him the greatest fib I ever told in my life. (*To him.*) Why, sir, there are more young men in the world than one——and I——

Hen. Oh! madam, spare yourself a confession which I perceive to be painful to you——

Emma (aside). I really believe he has found out, that I was going to tell him a fib.

Hen. And suffer me to understand, without further explanation, that I can never be your favoured lover.

Emma (aside). No! I declare he believes me. (*To him*) No, no, indeed, sir, I can't be so hard-hearted; I will do all I can for you; I will let you hope, and——

Hen. Then I will hope for your friendship, not your love.

Emma. No, indeed, I will try to have a kindness for you, so for gracious sake, don't go and hang, or drown, or do yourself any mischief——

Hen. Do not force your inclinations, sweetest Emma; I esteem your ingenuousness, but do not exact your love, indeed I am

unworthy the treasure—your pity, I covet ;
farewell ! (Exit.)

Emma. Poor, dear young man, how fond he is of me !—Oh dear ! I will pity him indeed ; but I ain't quite sure I can love him, if I try ever so hard ;—I should like a nice merry man to come a sweet-hearting to me ; this Mr. Henry is well enough, but o'my conscience, he talks as if he had got the vapours.

Enter HARRIOT.

Har. Well, Emma, have you seen Mr. Maitland ?

Emma. Yes, and the poor young man is quite smitten with me ; he is so afraid I should not have him, I thought he would have cried.

Har. (alarmed) Indeed, what did he say ?

Emma. Why he did not say much, he hummed and hawed, and looked quite melancholy, and asked me to pity him, and yet he did not talk much about love neither !—In truth, cousin, I should like a rapturous man, a million times better !—now, I dare say, the knight that comes a courting to you, kneels and vows, and compares you to the sun and clouds, and beautiful things, and stamps about, and tells you that he'll die for you, and is quite enchanting and sincere.

Enter Mrs. FRETQUIL.

Mrs. Fretq. Why, Harriot, why child! what are you doing here? Why ain't you in the drawing-room, studying an attitude to receive Sir Frederick in? I remember when Sir Courtly Nice paid his addresses to me, I was one day reclining on the sofa, and Sir Courtly on entering the room threw himself at my feet, and compared me to Diana resting after the chase, with one of my spaniels at my feet; compared himself to my lap-dog! there, girls, what think you of that elegant compliment of former days? my lap-dog!

Emma. Indeed, aunt, I think that compliment might be spoken with equal propriety by our modern beaux, for I have heard that some of them have as much right to call themselves puppies as their ancestors could possibly boast—come, cousin.

(Exeunt Harriot and Emma.)

Enter Mr. FRETQUIL.

Mrs. Fretq. Aye, Mr. Fretquil, you should have been here this moment, to have heard me relate the elegant compliment Sir Courtly Nice paid me. What pains did that poor man take to win my heart, by comparing me to blooming Venus, and awe-inspiring Juno, and captivating Sacharissa;—you never com-

pared me to any of those fabulous beauties.

Fretq. No, my dear, I was always too great an admirer of plain truth.

Mrs. Fretq. Well, sir, if you are determined not to pay me any attention, I wish you would have a little consideration for your own appearance ;—Is this a dress to receive Sir Frederick in ? I desire you will go up stairs directly, and put on your new coat.

Fretq. Well, I will, I will.

Mrs. Fretq. Aye, pray be a little on a par with your wife ; I think I am always dressed in taste, but I mean to be particularly so on this occasion : I shall lay by my blue jacket and petticoat, and yellow curricule, and make up a poppy coloured one.

Fretq. Do, my dear, by all means ; laying by your old habits will be one of the best jobs you can set about. *(Exit.)*

Mrs. Fretq. Paltry insinuation.

Enter THOMAS, looks round, and is going out.

What do you want ? What do you want ?

Tho. Nothing, madam, only I thought my master had been here. *(going.)*

Mrs. Fretq. Stop, who wants him ?

Tho. A person, madam, in a hackney-coach.

Mrs. Fretq. A woman, I'd lay my life ;—now is not it a woman, Thomas ?

Tho. I believe so, ma'am.

Mrs. Fretq. Well, tell her your master is out, but you expect him home every minute ; and show her in here to me ; go,—and, Thomas, tell the hack to wait at a distance.

Tho. Yes, ma'am. (Exit.)

Mrs. Fretq. This is some vile slut of my husband's, I am persuaded ;—impudent jade, to come to my house after him ; but I'll find out his tricks, I am determined—and to bring a hack to my door too,—I can't bear a hack to come to my door—Oh ! here she comes.

Enter MRS. SEDLEY.

Mrs. Sed. (curtsyng) I beg pardon, ma'am, I wished to have seen Mr. Fretquil.

Mrs. Fretq. I guess as much, ma'am, but you see Mrs. Fretquil.

Mrs. Sed. And you, madam, behold in me one of the most unhappy of women.

Mrs. Fretq. Like enough ! like enough !

Mrs. Sed. I am sufficiently presumptuous, ma'am, to think I shall find a friend in Mr. Fretquil.

Mrs. Fretq. Oh ! you have often done that, I dare say.

Mrs. Sed. No, madam ; I have never before been reduced to the sad necessity of putting his friendship to the test : he knew my father intimately ; indeed was under some trivial obligations to him, and——

Mrs. Fretq. And pray who might he be, if you are able to tell ?

Mrs. Sed. Madam?

Mrs. Fretq. Oh! you cannot answer the question—well then, Who are you? What is your name?

Mrs. Sed. Sedley, ma'am.

Mrs. Fretq. Well then, Miss Sedley——

Mrs. Sed. I am married, ma'am, and it is now in behalf of an unfortunate husband and child, that I am the suitor of Mr. Fretquil.

Mrs. Fretq. That is an artful turn, Miss, but it won't deceive me; the child I don't dispute, but as to the husband——

Mrs. Sed. Yes, madam, I have a husband, I repeat it, and one who, even in his present distressed situation, would not brook the illiberal insinuations you have thrown out against an unhappy woman, whose greatest crime is poverty, whose only fault, her condescension in becoming the suppliant of insensible wealth. (going.)

Mrs. Fretq. Stop, don't think that fine tragedy cant shall get you off with me, I am convinced of my suspicions, and I'll prove them.

Mrs. Sed. Innocence never shrinks from conviction—Of what do you accuse me?

Mrs. Fretq. Why that I am persuaded, that you and my husband are better acquainted than you would have me think.

Mrs. Sed. You certainly, madam, are mistaken in regard to the person you are addressing; how far Mr. Fretquil may have given

you reason to doubt his affection for you, I am not able to say; I can only answer for myself, that I never yet saw him.

Mrs. Fretq. You did not?—take care what you say; I suppose, you would have no objection to seeing him now then.

Mrs. Sed. I have already told you, madam, that I came hither on purpose to request an interview.

Mrs. Fretq. You shan't be disappointed, I am determined. Who waits? (*Enter Thomas*) Go up stairs to your master; he is in his own room, and tell him, I want to speak to him directly; and at your peril, say there is any body with me—go. (*Exit Thomas.*)

Mrs. Sed. (aside) What can this extraordinary conduct mean?

Mrs. Fretq. Yes, yes, you shall see him,—I'll confront you, Miss—Oh! here he comes; so, stand back,—stand back, I say.

(*Mrs. Sedley retires, enter FRETQUIL drest, Mrs. Fretquil meets him, and draws him to the front of the stage, and then says*)

Mrs. Fretq. My love!

Fretq. My dear!

Mrs. Fretq. Here has been a person, sweetest, begging your charity, and, indeed, I think you ought to do all in your power for her, duck.

Fretq. Why, dovy?

Mrs. Fretq. Why, precious, because she professes such an esteem, and a friendship,

and a love for you—likes you better than even your own dear wife does.

Fretq. Aye, indeed, who is she, life?

Mrs. Fretq. Nay, darling, you can tell that best; look at her, and see if you know her (*turns him round*). There she is.

Mrs. Sed. Heaven, support me!

Mrs. Fretq. Oh, what you have seen him, it seems?—Your brass won't hold out any longer, will it, miss?

Mrs. Sed. I can only answer, madam, that had I known who the master of this house was, I never would have entered his doors; and I now leave him to reflect on his unfriendly conduct towards the daughter of his deceased benefactor, Charles Hardyne. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. Fretq. Deceitful minx!—so you have been at your old tricks again, have you, sir?—trying to break the heart of an indulgent, affectionate, dutiful wife;—but you will soon have your wish, I am dying now, your usage has killed me, and the world shall know what pains you took to accomplish it, and then, what will you say for yourself?

Fretq. I'll consider of it when it happens; at present you say enough for us both.

Mrs. Fretq. You grey-headed old fool; you must set up for a man of gallantry, must you, as if you had any pretensions to be thought a buck?

Fretq. That you know best, Mrs Fretquil.

Mrs. Fretq. Why you abominable—but

you shall soon know the want of such a wife as I have been to you ; for as soon as I have married, and settled my daughter, my next concern shall be to sue for a separate maintenance. *(Exit.)*

Fretq. Why, what the devil can be the meaning of all this fuss?—that sweet creature here with my wife, and calling herself the daughter of Charles Hardyne ; that must be all a hum,—that girl married, and left the kingdom long ago ;—to be sure she must have come after me,—but then why did she run away from me?—frightened at my wife, I suppose !—And she will sue for a separate maintenance, will she?—but I think I can cool her courage !—I'll go and look for Harriot, and tell her I'm ready to become a bankrupt directly, and I warrant I shall soon see that my wife will prefer the idea of being poor with me, to starving without me.

(Exit.)

SCENE THE THIRD—AN ANTI-ROOM AT
MR. FRETQUIL'S

Enter THOMAS and MRS. SEDLEY.

Tho. This way, ma'am, I'll call up your carriage as soon as Sir Frederick Floricourt's drives off. *(Exit Thomas.)*

Mrs. Sed. What account of my visit shall I return to Mr. Sedley ? or how shall I venture to inform him, that I secreted from him

the occurrence of this morning?—What perplexing scenes am I doomed to go through!

Enter THOMAS.

Tho. Announce Sir Frederick Floricourt.

Enter SIR FREDERICK and Servants in Livery.

Sir Fred. (speaking as he enters). And do you hear, Modish, take the chariot and visit for me at the Duchess of Cassino's, Lady Marmelade's, and Sir Charles Plume's, and if the Marquis of Pimlico should call, I shall be home to dinner at eight.

Mrs. Sed. (advancing.) My brother!—oh, Charles!

Sir Fred. (aside.) Gad, this is unlucky! *(To her)* What do you want with me, woman?—what——

Mrs. Sed. Do you not know me?—Do you not remember, Clara?——

Sir Fred. The woman is insane, I believe! unhand me, I say——

Mrs. Sed. No, sir, the claim of nature shall not be called insanity,—I am your sister—I am——

Sir Fred. (snatching away his hand) Take care this poor woman does herself no harm—lead the way, sir!

(Exeunt Thomas, Sir Frederick, & Servants.)

Mrs. Sed. (after a pause) Charles!—oh! brother! brother! (shrieks, and sinks into a chair).

Enter HENRY.

Hen. What has happened, madam? Has any thing alarmed you?

Mrs. Sed. Nothing, sir, nothing; I have only experienced what I might have expected, the common fate of suffering poverty.

Hen. I think, madam, I heard you name yourself a sister—pardon my question, but is there any one in this house to whom you are thus nearly allied?

Mrs. Sed. (with firmness) No, sir, there once was, but my misfortunes have alienated his proud heart, and mine shall now be doubly arrogant, for I will never own, that the same parent who gave me birth, gave birth to so insensible a monster!

Hen. Grant me a moment's conference, nor think it an impertinent curiosity in a stranger, if I venture to enquire into the cause of your distress.

Mrs. Sed. Alas! sir, it is composed of a complicated train of misfortunes, on which the seal of misery is strongly stamped, and worthy only to be buried here in silence (*laying her hand upon her breast*).

Hen. I will not then exact the repetition of events that might increase the misery I wish to sooth; (*takes a folded paper out of his*

pocket-book which he presents to her) examine that paper at your leisure, it may perhaps apologize for my unwarrantable inquisitiveness;—if its contents offend, let my good will become the excuse of a mistaken action.

Mrs. Sed. I plainly perceive the generous act, which the delicacy of your noble heart prevents you from avowing; but indeed I must not with a stranger incur an obligation which I am well assured I can never return.

Hen. Madam, do not wrong my nature by supposing it so basely mercenary;—Where is the merit of an act of duty, if the hand be liberal, and the heart interested?

Mrs. Sed. Tell me then, noble youth, who my benefactor is, that if, in future time, fortune should chance to smile upon me, as it still may, I may acquit the obligation, and I will not wound your feelings, or my own necessities, by a refusal of your generous offer.

Hen. I beg of you not to enquire.

Mrs. Sed. Then I return your paper; on that condition only, I can take it.

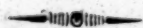
Hen. At present, I reside with Mr. Fretquil, my name is Henry Maitland.

Mrs. Sed. A name, on which Clara Sedley will not omit daily to implore a blessing!

(Exeunt).

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

The Fourth Act.



SCENE THE FIRST—MRS. SEDLEY'S ROOM.

Enter MRS. JENKINS.

Mrs. Jenk. So, I saw where madam went to in a hackney-coach; I was not to be trusted, I suppose!—well, no matter, I'll be up with her for her deceit, I am determined; for if I don't blow her to her husband, and leave her to get out of the scrape as well as she can, I am no woman;—but here she comes—deuce take her, she need not have been so distrustful, many greater ladies than she have trusted their secrets in my hands.

(Retires.)

Enter MRS. SEDLEY.

Mrs. Sed. Once more I am in safety;—Mr. Sedley not yet returned—I must not tell him whence I have procured this needful supply, his spirit, still proud in the depth of adversity, would revolt from the means, and his anger turn on his unhappy wife.

Enter MRS. JENKINS.

Mrs. Sed. Mrs. Jenkins, your lodgings are from this day at liberty for any friend for whom you may want them, I shall leave

them to-night, or to-morrow morning at the furthest.

Mrs. Jenk. Very well, ma'am, they will soon find new lodgers, I warrant, they never stood empty many days; people that's cleanly and civil can always get customers; and you may go further and fare worse, I'll be bound for it; but let all folks please themselves, say I.

Mrs. Sed. You may fetch me your bill, and I'll discharge it.

Mrs. Jenk. Very well, ma'am.

(*bounces out.*)

Mrs. Sed. Now let me examine the generous loan of my noble friend.—Gracious Heaven! a miniature portrait of a lady!—surely this must have been given me in mistake!—unfortunate error!—how shall I find means of returning it, or what apology shall I offer to this brutal woman?

Enter MRS. JENKINS.

Mrs. Jenk. There it is, ma'am.

Mrs. Sed. (*aside*). Mr. Sedley from home, I know not what to say to her.

Mrs. Jenk. There is the bill, ma'am——

Mrs. Sed. Mrs. Jenkins, I—I—indeed I have not the money to pay you.

Mrs. Jenk. Have not the money to pay me! well, I admire the impudence of some folks! coming and living in folk's houses, and then tell them, they have not the money to

pay them—I thought after the gentleman's coming this morning——

Mrs. Sed. Silence,—my reputation is my all, and I will still preserve it.

Mrs. Jenk. Here's a fuss, indeed, about reputation, with folks that can't pay their rent! but I fancy, if folks were to speak their mind, some folks ain't so very particular about their reputation as they pretend;—it would not do to let folks take liberties here, for fear folk's husband's should come home; but folk's husband's can't always tell where a hackney-coach stops.

Mrs. Sed. (*aside.*) How can I confute this wounding insinuation? How support the unmerited insults hourly falling on me? (*to her*) Pray leave me.

Mrs. Jen. Oh! you do it very well indeed, there's nothing like assurance; but the room's mine, and here I'll sit, till you pay me for the use of it. (*sits down.*)

Mrs. Sed. Oh! where will my misfortunes end? (*weeps.*)

Enter SEDLEY.

Sed. In tears, my Clara! Why is this?

Mrs. Sed. Oh, Charles!—

Sed. Speak, Clara, what has affected you?

Mrs. Sed. I have been insulted! betrayed! oh!——

Sed. Who has done this?

Mrs. Sed. That woman this morning introduced into my apartment, a person, a man, for the basest of purposes,—and now——

Mrs. Jenk. Oh Lord, if I—(*rises.*)

Sed. Silence, wretch, I never yet had cause to doubt the truth of her who now accuses thee, and when I have proof of thy baseness, I will annihilate thy worthless frame.

Mrs. Jenk. Aye, sir, one story is good till another is heard, but if the lady had been so much vexed as she pretends about the gentleman's coming here, I can't see much reason for her going to his house in a hackney-coach, half an hour after.

Sed. Slanderer! that coach took my Clara to Mr. Fretquil's.

Mrs. Jenk. Yes, sir! and Mr. Fretquil's the gentleman that came to visit her this morning, and now you know the whole truth, and that's what people always get by telling tales of me. I have done my duty, and I am satisfied.

Sed. Leave the room.

Mrs. Jenk. No, sir! I——

Sed. Leave the room, I say.

(*Exit Mrs. Jenkins muttering.*)

Sed. Clara, my misfortunes hitherto have been of my own seeking, as such I have borne them patiently.

Mrs. Sed. And have not I?

Sed. And why? but that you might in return exact from me patience beyond the power of reason.

Mrs. Sed. Try mine, command me the severest trial, and for my Sedley's sake I will bear it.

Sed. Wert thou not lost to every sense of virtue, the greatest I could put thee to, were to hear me call thee false.

Mrs. Sed. Unhappy day! that I should live to be upbraided by the man for whom I gave up all;—for whom I gloried in so doing; for whom I would willingly make the greatest sacrifice;—and on the weak insinuation of a malicious woman!

Sed. Clara, have not your own words confirmed her assertion?

Mrs. Sed. Hear an explanation of them.

Sed. A false one is easily formed.

Mrs. Sed. Then hear me call on Heaven—

Sed. Hold, I will not add perjury to thy sins.

Mrs. Sed. Heaven will not think it so, why should you decide it such?

Sed. Till now, I never wished to read the heart with keener eye than is allotted unto man.

Mrs. Sed. Then by my hopes of happiness to come, had you that power, it would reveal to you my innocence of every love, but yours.

Sed. Clara, I feel I love you still too tenderly to wrong you wilfully—but I will be convinced you love me too.

Mrs. Sed. Then hear me defend myself.

Sed. (hastily) No, to hear an explanation of my doubts, were still to own suspicion—I will *not* suspect her my heart inclines to love—come to my arms.

Mrs. Sed. More willingly than when I first owned you their lord.

Sed. Forgive my mean suspicions, Clara ; but when the mind is harrassed, it easily admits opinions which in cooler reason it abhors.

Enter MRS. JENKINS.

Mrs. Jenk. May I come in?

Sed. What is your business?

Mrs. Jenk. Here is a note for one of you.

Sed. Give it me—now begone.

Mrs. Jenk. Oh ! I have made them both preciouslly unhappy. *(Aside, and exit.)*

Sed. (reading) To Mrs. Sedley.

Mrs. Sed. Heaven grant my uncle has answered my letter to him.

Sed. Retire, retire, I say—*(Mrs. Sedley retires up the stage.) (reads)* “ Sweetest of
“ lovely creatures.”—Devils !— “ I can’t ex-
“ press to you, how much I regret my wife’s
“ brutal conduct having prevented my re-
“ ceiving you as I should have gloried in
“ doing this morning, when you were so

“ kind as to call upon me;”—Adulteress!—
“ but I understood the purport of your visit,
“ and you may depend that I will call on you
“ at the time your husband goes to take his
“ evening walk; till when, most adorable
“ angel, believe me, with the sincerest affection,
“ your most enchanted admirer,

Antony Fretquil.”

Damnation! fool! fool! fool! to take and hug her to my heart, because she would have sworn her innocence;—dolt that I was!—Does not adultery carry with it perjury? perjury to which *all* perjury beside is falsehood in its palest garb, when the black stain of broken marriage-vows stands in competition with it.

Mrs. Sed. (comes forward) What ails you, Charles?

Sed. You—Lynx—fawn on me—kiss me—weep—soften my heart again, and laugh at me in your sleeve, that I am your tool—your ass!

Mrs. Sed. Heaven preserve me! what have I done to anger you?

Sed. You have abused yourself, and thereby set a mark of scorn on me—cockatrice! Can infamy appear so innocent?

Mrs. Sed. Is it then so hard to seem what we really are?—oh! your eyes roll—Why do you look thus wildly? You are not in your senses.

Sed. Yes! yes! yes, I am; hush!—I'll show you I am; I am, indeed; hush! (*exit wildly, and drops the letter.*)

Mrs. Sed. Ha! this may explain to me his conduct (*reads it*). Oh! why are the shafts of misery pointed against innocence?—It is in vain to argue with him,—his mysterious mein!—What can words avail against such seeming proofs? his heated temper too!—my brain, oh!—(*kneels by the table*) To thee, Power Omnipotent, who alone know'st my sufferings and innocence, I kneel, imploring thy benign interposition; hear me, and grant what thou canst better understand, than I explain.

(*Whilst she is kneeling, Sedley enters with a pistol in his hand, and supposing her to be on the spot where he had left her, directs his pistol at it, and fires; she shrieks, and runs out; he, thinking he has killed her, stands some time in despair, then speaks frantically thus*)

Sed. Ah! I am a murderer! more blackly damned in hell for this than she for being false—Oh! I dare not look upon her,—she is—(*a pause; turns round and finds her gone*) Ah! gone! fled! some protecting angel has spared her and me!—well, let her live! and let her conscience be her scourge! she is false, but she once was true to me! Oh, Clara! once more I will embrace thee—

then fly with thee for ever from this world of perfidy. *(Exit.)*

SCENE SECOND—AN ELEGANT DRAWING-ROOM AT MR. FRETQUIL'S, WITH GLASS DOORS IN THE FLAT.

Enter EMMA.

Emma. Well, I declare my new aunt is the crossest old woman not to let me stay in the room when his Sirship was there, though I said I was dying to see him!—To be sure she must think me handsomer than cousin Harriot, or she would not have been so afraid to let me be there; so as I know that by the bargain, I think I ain't so very angry with her after all;—I know his Sirship is coming again presently, and I'll trick her I am determined; she does not know that I am come down from my chamber, so I'll get into this closet, and peep through the glass-door when he comes; he! he! he!—I wonder whether Sirs go a sweet-hearting like other men, 'ecod I'll see. *(Exit into the closet.)*

Enter HARRIOT and FRETQUIL.

Fretq. Well, child, but how came it, that you did not make this discovery to him then?

Har. Why, sir, I was fearful, that if I was so speedy in my information, my stratagem would wear too much the appearance of fal-

lacy to carry weight with it; if I deferred it to his second visit, I thought it more likely to produce the desired effect, especially after I had received the first with affected pleasure.

Fretq. That's right, child, that's right; but when is he coming again?

Har. He mentioned that he was going further into the city, and should call again on his return.

Fretq. Very well—and Henry and Emma are charmed with each other; and now if you get quit of this Sir Fiddlestick, we'll look out for a nice spark for you. Only about this sham bankruptcy, remember, when the cat jumps out of the bag, not to tell your mother that I had any hand in putting her in, because I might chance to get a scratch or so, and——

Har. Oh no! no fear, sir!

Fretq. May be not, but a burnt child you know——(*a knocking without*) Adso, here he is—I wish you success, Harriot, and as to my wife,—ah! child, you know it is a plan I never much approved of. (*Exit.*)

Enter SIR FREDERICK, introduced by Thomas, who exit.)

Sir Fred. My adorable Harriot, the felicity of seeing you thus alone is a transporting happiness indeed! But why so grave, my charmer? I never was so happy, never so gay in my life.

Har. I am afraid, Sir Frederick, that I am under the disagreeable necessity of throwing a damp upon your vivacity.

Sir Fred. Impossible ! it will be as lasting as my passion for you.

Har. I am going to ask a few moments' conversation, Sir Frederick, in which I must beg of you to be sincere with me.

Sir Fred. Can you doubt my sincerity, dearest girl ? Witness my solemn protestations !—I swear, as long as vital breath flows round this heart, to entertain for you an unalterable ardor, a flame which can be extinguished only by death—a solemn——

(*kneels.*)

Har. Rise, Sir Frederick, I asked your attention to what I am going to say, not your protestations ;—for to avow my real sentiments, I regard yours at this moment as vain and unmeaning.

Sir Fred. Nay, my angel ! there you wrong me cruelly indeed ; had I not adored your charms, even to a wish of expiring in your chains, or living the humblest slave of your nod ; should I have refused the Duchess of Cassino's daughter with a fortune of forty thousand pounds, when she was absolutely forced into my arms ? Should I——

Har. I think you were wrong, Sir Frederick, in not forming so advantageous an engagement.

Sir Fred. Consult your glass, and then tell me, whether I am to blame.

Har. Consult your heart, and then tell *me*, whether those charms on which you are pleased so highly to compliment me, were the only motives by which you were actuated in asking my hand? Were you not biassed by the dower you expected to obtain with me, as being the only child of an indulgent parent?

Sir Fred. What shall I say to convince you, that if you were without friends, without fortune, I should be equally ambitious to call you mine.

Har. Suppose, Sir Frederick, that my father, by an unexpected stroke of fortune, had fallen from the summit of prosperity into the abyss of indigence and despair, that he stood in need of your credit and assistance, would you generously lend him your helping hand to raise him up again?

Sir Fred. What would I not do for your sake, my dearest Harriot; but tell me, my charmer, is it irony that has induced you thus to question me?—I can't possibly imagine what you mean; you have thrown me into the greatest agitation; for Heaven's sake, explain!

Har. Know then, Sir Frederick, that my father has just received the bitter intelligence of the failure of a house in *Hamburgh*, with which he has carried on a very considerable commerce for these twenty years past, and

which falls entirely on him, without a hope of the smallest recovery.

Sir Fred. I am thunderstruck!—Is it to a great amount?

Har. So great, that I fear it will cause our utter ruin.

Sir Fred. (aside) What an unlucky dog I am, always to get in the way of bad fortune; but I'm off. *(To her)* Surely Mr. Fretquil has been a very rash adventurer to trust so large a sum in the hands of one person; I am surprized at his temerity.

Har. Business, Sir Frederick, cannot be carried on without advancing considerable sums of money; besides he was daily in expectation of receiving great remittances.

Sir Fred. Poor man! I am sorry for him, upon my soul I am, and heartily wish he may find some good friend to help him out of this scrape; and I wish you much happier, Miss Fretquil, with some other man than you possibly could have been with me;—I am a stranger in this family, and my presence must certainly be disagreeable at this melancholy juncture; therefore I have the honor of declaring myself your very humble servant, till we meet again *(she curtsies, he bows, Harriot exit)*, which I intend should never be.

(going)

(Enter EMMA from the closet, and crosses upon Sir Frederick as he is going out).

Emma. Oh, lord ! well, if I dare stay under a roof where people tell such stories ; it will certainly fall in and crush us all.

Sir Fred. And who are you, my pretty puritan ?

Emma. Well, I wonder, Miss Harriot ain't both ashamed and afraid to behave so to a gentleman that is a *Sir* ; if he had been only a man, there might have been some excuse for tricking him, and telling him a falsehood.

Sir Fred. (*aside*) Trick ! falsehood ! what can all this mean ? (*To her*) Will you have the goodness, miss, to explain to me the subject that so deeply engages your attention ?

Emma. Why, sir, then don't you cry, your sirship, nor don't you care about her, for she's not worth your minding——

Sir Fred. Who ?

Emma. Why Miss Fretquil, sir ; she has been imposing on you, and telling you a story about her father having lost all his money.

Sir Fred. How !

Emma. Yes, your sirship, 'tis true indeed, and I wonder she ain't afraid her mouth should be closed for telling such falsehoods ; I am sure she deserves to die the ugliest old maid that ever lived for slighting such an offer——

Sir Fred. My dear, you compliment——

Emma. No, sir, and if I had all the world,

instead of only poor thirty thousand pounds, I would give it to such a gentleman.

Sir Fred. (aside). Ho! ho! I must tack about. *(to her)* Ay, ma'am! you mean to such a one as me,—but sure you would never have given it to me! to this person?

Emma. Yes, your worship, I would; because I think you are worthy of it.

Sir Fred. And your heart along with it?

Emma. No, sir, I could not have done that, that's gone first.

Sir Fred. (half aside) Unhappy man! some more fortunate fellow has stepped in before me, and——

Emma. Heigh ho!

Sir Fred. Aye, I see you have lost it!

Emma. Perhaps, sir, you feel I have——

Sir Fred. Sincerely, sincerely sweet——

Emma. What do you really love me then, sir?

Sir Fred. Can you wish it, when you declare you have lost your heart?

Emma. Aye, but you have got it.

Sir Fred. Extacy! *(aside)* I am a lucky dog at last, *(to her)* and, oh! my dear sweet angelic,—*(kisses her)* What's your pretty name?

Emma. Emma.

Sir Fred. Lady Emma Floricourt—and so—*(aside)* thirty thousand pounds *(to her)*. And so, Miss Emma, Harriot, I mean, im-

posed upon me, and—Aye, very well; I am glad of it; I never liked her. (*aside*) Her father never offered but ten thousand down. (*to her*) never liked any—(*aside*) Would not have above doubled it at his death—(*to her*) Never really liked any woman but—never doated on any woman till I saw you; (*aside*) for she's the only woman that ever offered me thirty thousand pounds—(*to her*) you are an angelic!—a golden angel!

Emma. (*half aside*) oh! he is quite rapturous and enchanting!

Sir Fred. And so this Miss Fretquil took it into her head not to like me, did she? (*aside*) smoaked me, I suppose. (*to her*) No, no, the god of love in junction with all the soft powers, (*aside*) not forgetting the god of money, (*to her*) had destined me to enjoy your affection, (*aside*) and thirty thousand pounds.

Emma. Lord! who would live in the country? oh! sir, I declare——

Sir Fred. And I declare, lovely Emma, I am out of my wits with joy at having found you. (*aside*) Who the deuce can she be? (*to her*) I think you mentioned the country, Emma! how long have you been in London?

Emma. Almost a day.

Sir Fred. Ay, come to look for a husband, I suppose, eh?

Emma. No, here is one that would be my

husband—looking for me, but I can't bear him; and so——

Sir Fred. And so you have transferred your love to me; and an excellent choice you have made; for next to Lord what's-his-name, that lives in thingumy-square, curse me, if I don't defy the tailors, shoe-makers, hair-dressers, and hatters, to turn out a smarter, cleverer, neater, livelier, or richer fellow than myself, (*aside*) now I have got the thirty thousand pounds.

Emma. And I am sure none of the London ladies shall be a match for me, at wearing fine things, and cheating at cards, and lolling in my coach, and scolding my servants, and flirting with the beaux, and talking louder than the actors when I go to the play, and all the rest ont, when I am Lady—what's your hard name?

Sir Fred. Floricourt, my charmer, Frederick Floricourt, a man of ton, fashion, gallantry, impudence, ease, vanity, and every other polite accomplishment.

Emma. Aye, but do you know, that you may lose me now, if you don't look out sharp after spouse that was to have been.

Sir Fred. May I? dam'me, if I don't fight for you and the thirty thousand pounds as long as I can clench my fist.

Emma. Your sword or pistol, you mean.

Sir Fred. Oh, no, my dear, those weapons

are grown quite vulgar, all gentlemen use the fist at the present day.

Emma. Ecod, that's just like the ploughmen in the country, when two of 'em quarrel, one doubles his fist, and says, "by goals, Jack, I'll lick you"—"I'm your mon"—says t'other, and at it they go, thumping one another, till they bleed like dying pigs; and then they are quiet.

Sir Fred. Aye, my dear, and it is just the same in high life,—suppose a gentleman calls me a scoundrel—scoundrel! I repeat, and immediately place myself in a boxing attitude;—he takes the hint, squares his arms, faces me, and a circle is form'd round us in a second—first round, ward all blows; but don't strike—bets in his favor;—second round, the same;—bets double against me;—third round, he gets spent, begins to flag;—I follow him up tight, and plunge at his bread-basket;—well struck, Fred, says a by-stander, tickle him up under the short ribs;—I do it; give him a cross buttock,—says another? I go it;—come Ben Boosle over his jaw-bones, cries a third; I plump it;—bets run high in my favor;—still follow him up close; keep a sharp eye, mind my points;—darken his day-lights, with Mendoza's favorite,—tip him the settler—knowing ones taken in; and a loud huzza from the by-standers, to salute the conqueror!

Emma. Oh, delightful!

Sir Fred. Quite the thing, I assure you; and now let me see who dares question my right to your lovely person, or the thirty thousand pounds;—come, my carriage waits; I'll pop you into it, and you shall commence Lady Floricourt this very minute.

Emma. With all my heart!

Sir Fred. 'Gad, you are a girl of spirit—Lady Floricourt's carriage directly.

Enter MRS. FRETQUIL.

Stand out of the way, old woman.

(Sir Frederick and Emma push past her, and exeunt.)

Mrs. Fretq. *(after a pause)*. Old woman? stand out of the way, old woman! Am I awake?—am I alive?—am I in my senses?—why Harriot,—Harriot,—Harriot, I say!—

Enter HARRIOT.

Why, Harriot, what have you been doing or saying to affront Sir Frederick?

Har. Alas! madam, my father's misfortunes have driven him hence.

Mrs Fretq. What does the girl mean?

Har. The intelligence he has just received of the failure of a commercial house in Hamburg, which involves him in the utmost distress, and which he commanded me to impart to Sir Frederick.

Mrs. Fretq. Here's a pretty piece of work indeed! and so that slut Emma has got Sir Frederick by the bargain—Oh, I shall faint! I shall die!—no! I won't submit to own I am hurt; but I'll go and read your father a lecture for his indiscretion;—I will, I promise him, Emma, indeed! *(Exit).*

Har. Thus far, all goes well;—now comes the severer trial—oh! that the heart of my Henry, may prove as constant as the faith of Sir Frederick was brittle!—but he is here!

Enter HENRY.

Har. Henry, your countenance bespeaks that you have heard my unhappy father's misfortune.

Hen. Oh, Harriot, that I were able to prove to you, how warmly my heart partakes in his calamity!—that I had the ability to restore his loss!—and yet, deem me not unfeeling, if I declare, that a spark of joy is mingled with the concern I feel for your father's fate; since I may now, without being accounted mercenary, declare that I am sufficiently presumptuous to love his daughter.

Har. (aside) Generous youth!—oh! heart abate thy extacy. *(To him)* Henry, this is no time for—*(aside)* what shall I say? *(to him)* Henry, go and console my father; serve him if you are able, and you insure my friendship.

Hen. Did not my heart lead me to offer

him every assistance my limited circumstances permit, your words were law—but think you not, Sir Frederick could advance a sum sufficient to support the credit of the house?

Har. I cannot now explain to you, why it must not be asked of him—he is gone forever, Henry.

Hen. And carries your heart with him?

Har. My disdain!—Henry, I can discriminate between uninterested affection, and mercenary vows; I have already shewn my contempt of the one; the other I cannot but esteem.
(*Retires up the stage.*)

Hen. Does she deign to return my passion?—or, do her words barely carry with them the meaning they expressed?—oh! time, fly swiftly, and unravel her thoughts.

(*Exit.*)

Har. (*coming forward*). Oh! what a heart is his; now indeed I shall not blush to avow my affection; but the moment for confession is not yet arrived!

S O N G.

Be still, fond heart, ah! ne'er betray
That love has found thy cell,
Ah! let no smother'd sigh declare,
Affection there to dwell:
Oh! let me when I Henry meet
Hide each confessing smile;
Oh! let not his discerning eye,
Discover Cupid's wile:

Let rapture break its first surprise upon his doating
heart,
Let transport blow her clarion loud, to say we ne'er
shall part ;
Let constancy entwine the wreath that graces Hymen's
hand,
And all the loves proclaim the joys of wedlock's
happy band.

(Exit.)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.



The Fifth Act.

SCENE THE FIRST—AN ANTI-ROOM IN SIR
FREDERICK'S HOUSE.

*Enter SIR GABRIEL with his hat on, as
being just returned from walking.*

Sir Gab. What an alteration has this city undergone, in the course of fifteen years! Ladies at the West end of the town, that used to think it an indulgence, if they were permitted to ride in a hackney-coach, now take the whip-hand of their husbands in phætons and four; and citizens wives that now swing about in chairs, tricked out in their feathers, like a goose on her nest, used to walk a visiting in their pattens and calash, with a little errant-boy before them to carry the lanthorn! No wonder the bankrupt list is crouded!

Enter SIMON.

Sim. Oh dear, your honor! that ever I should come to London to see such sights as I have seen this day!

Sir Gab. What are the sights you have seen to me?

Sim. Yes, indeed, they are, your honor; and if you will but have a minute's patience

to hear me, I'll tell you such a story—I was a walking abroad with Mr. Modish, and I stopped to look at a lad and a lass that were dancing i' the street, to the music of a pair of bagpipes, and Mr. Modish laughed at my country curiosity, and said it was ruination to the reputation of a gentleman to be so vulgar as to be pleased with a public sight; and I made answer, and said, Mr. Modish, says I, as I don't pretend to be a gentleman, I shall always be so vulgar as to give the exertions of merit that praise which they deserve from every honest heart.

Sir Gab. What is all this to me, I again ask?

Sim. Yes, it is indeed, your honor—it is indeed; for presently I stopped again—What is the matter? says Mr. Modish—“Look at that poor lady, running about just as if she were mad,” said I,—poh, cries Mr. Modish, it is only a woman in distress—only a woman in distress! turns I upon him; you have laughed at my country curiosity once, Mr. Modish, and now you'll do so again, no doubt, for my country curiosity is always too great to pass a woman in distress, without asking if I can help her out of trouble—and who does your honor think it was? why poor Miss Clara!

Sir Gab. Clara!

Sim. She is now in the hall, your honor; she says, she shall die of grief, if your honor don't let her see you.

Sir Gab. I don't think I shall.

Sim. She looks so piteous, it would melt a heart of stone to see her; but she won't quite starve, if your honor is so cruel as not to assist her.

Sir Gab. What do you mean? speak.

Sim. Why, pray don't be angry, your honor, but I made bold to say to her, says I, she looked so sad I could not help it—says I, I have saved a matter of sixty pounds by service, and if old master be so heard hearted as to turn tail on you, ecod Simon will turn tail o' him, and if you can manage to live on that awhile, it shall go heard indeed but Simon will find honest means to earn you a livelihood.

Sir Gab. Don't chatter, but send her to me.

Sim. Oh! bless your honor, for poor Miss Clara; that I will directly; bless your honor.
(*Exit.*)

Sir Gab. How the poor fellow's regard for one who once was dear to me, affects me! oh, Clara! prove but thine innocence, and thou wilt be dearer to me than ever.

Enter MRS. SEDLEY, she throws herself upon her knees, catches Sir Gabriel's hand, and kisses it.

Mrs. Sed. Oh! my uncle, do not drive me from you, look upon me, I beseech you; I have been imprudent, but I have suffered for

my conduct; indeed I have suffered severely; do not you, as my father did, defer your forgiveness to an hour, when I cannot express to you my obligations for your kindness.

Sir Gab. Rise, Clara, and tell me, whether amidst those sufferings you name, the sting of conscience, caused by your unhappy course of life, has not been your severest scourge?

Mrs. Sed. I know that those who are bound in wedlock's chains, are said to act from the same impulse; but trust me on my faith, I never dipped into the faulty practices of my unhappy husband.

Sir Gab. I mean not that—Can you on that faith aver yourself free from every other vice?

Mrs. Sed. I deserted my friends for one I took to be my nearest relative; my love for him was then a fault in nature, I freely do confess it, but surely no vice.

Sir Gab. 'Tis that which you must prove to me; did the sacred rites of religion sanction your love?

Mrs. Sed. What mean you, sir?

Sir Gab. Are you the wife of him you fled with?

Mrs. Sed. Gracious Heaven! is it possible you can seriously make that demand?—Oh! sir, your suspicions cut me to the heart.

Sir Gab. I have been persuaded to think them true, Clara; I considered how men

will delude those they pretend to love; how easily a virgin-heart is led to credit a deceiver's tongue; and these reasonings confirmed what was often repeated to me;—I concealed it from your father, or he had died without pronouncing pardon on you; but I resolved not to own you again as my niece, till I learnt the truth—this was the reason, I answered not your supplicating letter.

Mrs. Sed. Oh! how cruelly have I been wronged! how vilely has your credulity been abused!—I have, thanks to Heaven, the certificate of my marriage now about me, and that will prove my innocence of this base aspersion.

(In bringing her pocket-book out of her pocket, she pulls out her handkerchief, and the miniature portrait Henry had given her falls from it;—Sir Gabriel takes it up; looks upon it stedfastly, then says, in great agitation)

Sir Gab. Whence did you procure this portrait? is she alive? do you know her? answer me, I entreat you.

Mrs. Sed. A strange event! incomprehensible almost to myself, and which has proved to me of the most unhappy consequences, threw it this day into my hands.

Sir Gab. Explain it, for till I hear——
(a knocking without) ah! we are interrupted; come to my apartment, here are visitors to your brothe

Mrs. Sed. Merciful powers! is he too in this house?

Sir Gab. He is, but follow me, I conjure you; I am on the rack till you throw some light on this strange occurrence; come, my dear Clara.

Mrs. Sed. Oh! that tender word is balsam to my wounded heart, and gives me strength to encounter the train of difficulties that await me. *(Exeunt).*

(Loud talking heard without, then enter MODISH followed by FRETQUIL and HENRY).

Mod. You are very welcome to walk in, sir, but Sir Frederick is not at home.

Fretq. I know he is, that's fashionable cant, and only means that he does not choose to be seen; but I must see him, and I will see him.

Mod. Well, sir, then he is at home; but he is particularly engaged, and has given orders, that he won't see any body.

Fretq. Why you impudent fellow, then how durst you tell me, he was not?

Mod. I must obey my master's orders, sir.

Fretq. Here's a pretty joke, so you gentlemen tell lies, because your masters bid you?

Mod. We should lose our places if we did not.

Fretq. And ain't there more to be got?

Mod. Yes, but not characters, and they

take care not to leave us in possession of the one, when they discharge us from the other.

Fretq. Then why don't you discharge yourself?

Mod. Oh! no, sir, the place is too good, perquisites run high, besides many little——

Fretq. But, zounds! what a fool am I to stand talking here, whilst——here, here is a piece of gold for you, and I'll double it, if you get us admittance to Sir Frederick. My name is Fretquil. *(gives him money.)*

Mod. I'll try, sir,—now you see the value of my place, sir. *(Exit.)*

Fretq. Oh, Lord! why a gentleman's gentleman at this end of the town is a greater man than I am at the head of my counting-room at the other; for if I tell an innocent hum in the way of business, my own industry must pay me for exercising my invention: but these puppies get paid by the very people they crack their jokes on.—Sir Frederick dare to take off my niece indeed! I'll shew him I can have law, though I live at the East end of the town;—Henry, don't be cast down; for she shall marry you, whether she will or not.

Hen. I should be sorry indeed, sir, to force Miss Emma's inclinations; besides I should be apprehensive, happiness could not ensue from a marriage to which one of the parties was averse,

Fretq. Pshaw! you'll be only like Biddy and me, and we are used to one another, and like one another as well as most married folks do, only some people shew their affection one way and some another.

Enter MODISH.

Fretq. Well, sir!

Mod. Sir Frederick desires you'll walk up stairs, sir!

Fretq. Oh! oh! what, he may be seen for a guinea a-piece?

Mod. You gave me but one, sir.

Fretq. That's as much as to say I promised you another.—there—I suppose we shall see him for half price next time, if we bring an additional visitor, like the Lion over Exeter-Change—come, shew the way. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter SIR GABRIEL and MRS. SEDLEY.

Mrs. Sed. I am certain, sir, it was the voice of Mr. Fretquil.

Sir Gab. Be composed, Clara, I believe you innocent; I will protect you, I will vindicate your fame, though at the ruin of his. Be composed.

Enter MODISH, as crossing the stage.

Sir Gab. Who is that person now with my nephew?

Mod. The old gentleman called himself Fretquil, sir; who the young one is, I know not.

Sir Gab. Young gentleman, said you ;— is there a young gentleman hither come with Mr. Fretquil?

Mod. Yes, sir.

Sir Gab. Tell the young gentleman, if his name is Maitland, a gentleman wishes to see him immediately ; don't say who, but bring him hither directly (*exit Modish*). Clara, retire a moment to my apartment—there await the dispersing of this mysterious cloud : that done, your concerns alone shall occupy my thoughts and actions. (*Exit Mrs. Sedley*).

Enter HENRY, and MODISH, who crosses and exit.

Hen. I am told, sir, you wish to see me.

Sir Gab. Your ready compliance with my request, bespeaks I was not mistaken in naming you Maitland.

Hen. Henry Maitland, sir, is my name.

Sir Gab. The goodness of your heart, young sir, has, I find, prompted you this day to seek acquaintance with a stranger, for the noble purpose of alleviating her distress : on this presumption, I think you will hardly refuse a few words to another stranger, who seeks them from a similar motive.

Hen. (*taking out his purse*). Oh ! sir, the slender——

Sir Gab. You mistake me, young man, put up your purse, and listen to me :—In the

donation you meant to bestow on the unfortunate lady, you this morning saw at Mr. Fretquil's, I am led to believe some error has taken place; you meant not surely to give her this portrait?

Hen. Heavens! how is this?—no, sir, from that portrait I would not part but in death;—the mistake has originated in my having folded a bank-note in a paper of equal size, and having, in the hurry of the moment, presented to the object of my compassion a gift of immaterial worth to her, to me, of inestimable value.

Sir Gab. How came you known to Mr. Fretquil?

Hen. After passing through a variety of fortune, since the death of my mother, which happened when I was only eight years of age, chance threw me into the way of Mr. Fretquil; he liked, and favoured me; I studied to deserve the favour he shewed me, and have insured its continuance for nearly seven years.

Sir Gab. So young, say you, when your mother died? where was her abode?

Hen. At a small cottage in a retired part of Devonshire; where I lived with her till her death, ever since I have recollection of my being—she shunned strangers, and seemed to know no one, but the old couple with whom she resided.

Sir Gab. But her name was not Maitland.

Hen. So she called herself.

Sir Gab. But the world would have called her Hardyne.

Hen. Merciful powers! oh! sir, how know you this?

Sir Gab. The story you have related, that portrait, your features, all, all, confirm your mother was my own sister.

Hen. (*kneeling.*) Oh! sir, does then at length, he who thought himself the forlorn, friendless orphan, Henry Maitland, behold a relative to whom the ties of blood connect him?

Sir Gab. Rise, Henry, and meet the embrace of thy uncle.—My poor sister!—how knew you her name, did she herself disclose it to you?

Hen. I often heard her pronounce the name with a heavy sigh, and I as often urged her, with a childish inquisitiveness, to declare to me, why it hung so frequently on her tongue; she then confessed to me, it was her real name, but sternly commanded me never to reveal it, nor attempt to find my relations, as they would spurn me from them.

Sir Gab. Did she relate to you her unhappy story?

Hen. No, sir! likely she thought me too young to be entrusted with it.

Sir Gab. Briefly thus it ran—in her twen-

tieth year, a mutual affection took root in the hearts of my sister and your father, whose name you bear; their respective friends approved their love, and a day at some short distance was fixed for their union; but they, too warm in love, were hurried into the commission of a deed, their cooler moments would have scorned: meanwhile, the matrimonial hour was rapidly advancing, when, alas! a severe illness seized your father, and he died on the very morning of that day which was for ever to have united him to your mother.

Hen. Unhappy woman!

Sir Gab. Cruel destiny refused to hide her frantic sorrow and disgrace in the same tomb with her best beloved—she confessed her situation, and some short time after, having collected together a moderate sum of money, and some valuable trinkets, she departed from her father's house by night, and no enquiries could ever discover the place of her retreat.

Hen. Mysterious Heaven! oh! I have much to learn—but joy bewilders me, and I know not what first to ask.

Sir Gab. First then, in a new light, though not less welcome, I'll introduce you to the lady who called forth your compassion—she is my niece—your cousin.

Hen. Indeed!—ah, me! is my page of happiness so soon blotted? must I call the in-

human Sir Frederick by the same title of relationship, I shall hail his angel sister?

Sir Gab. Let not that thought trouble you.—I have heard his brutality to my niece, and I will humble him—if I can reclaim him, I shall be proud to wear him in my heart;—if he persists in doing wrong, I pluck him out,—the trial is his due. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE THE SECOND—A ROOM AT SIR FREDERICK'S.

EMMA discovered making tea, SIR FREDERICK sitting on one side of the table, FRETQUIL standing on the other.

Sir Fred. And so, Mr. Fretquil, as I was saying, I am extremely grieved for your late misfortunes;—but I think you had better sit down—do sit down and take a cup of tea;—I must have the rudeness to force you to take a seat amongst us *(forces him into a chair)*; do take one cup, *(aside)* curse the old fellow, come to borrow money, I dare say—

Fretq. (who has been trying to speak all this while.) I say, Sir Frederick, I am come—

Sir Fred. And I, sir, repeat, that nothing could increase the pleasure your visit occasions me, but your taking one cup of tea with us.

Fretq. Zounds! Sir Frederick, I have been here this half hour, and not a word will you let me speak——

Sir Fred. Pardon me, I am all attention ;— is there any thing you take in preference to tea ?

Fretq. Curse tea, I say, what do you intend to do with my niece ?

Enter MODISH.

Mod. Mrs. Fretquil is below, Sir Frederick.

Sir Fred. Oh ! pray desire her to walk up immediately. *(Exit Modish.)*

Fretq. (aside) Ah ! now she'll come and spoil all.

Enter MRS. FRETQUIL.

Sir Fred. Madam, your most obedient, I am extremely happy in the pleasure of seeing you at Floricourt-house, though I must confess it is an unexpected pleasure ; pray be seated, ma'am—you have not taken tea yet, I presume,—have you any preference in your tea ? pray mention your favorite sort.

Mrs. Fretq. Sir Frederick, I——

Sir Fred. Ma'am, I must insist,—*(puts her into a chair)* and now, sir, you were just asking me as this lady entered, what I meant to do with your niece ?—why, sir, I shall marry her.

Mrs. Fretq. Marry her ! and what do you intend to do with my daughter, Sir Frederick ? I am come here on purpose to know, so——

Sir Fred. Why ma'am, I *wish* her well married.

Mrs. Fretq. And won't marry her yourself?

Sir Fred. Indeed, madam, you must excuse me, I think one wife quite sufficient as times go.

Fretq. (aside) He is not so much out in his reckoning there, however.

Mrs. Fretq. Then, Sir Frederick, you are perjured;—did you not tell my daughter, that she was an angel,—my exact resemblance, and that you could die for her, and could live only in her sight;—don't you remember that?

Sir Fred. No, it has unfortunately slipped my memory; but I dare say I did—I make no doubt but I did; those flowery speeches issue from the mouths of men of galantry, like shot from a piece which a fowler is discharging after his return from a day's sport; they are aimed at no particular object, but do equal execution on the spot where they fall, as if they had been purposely directed at it.

Mrs. Fretq. Very fine, sir; very fine;—fewer words will serve me to tell you, why you deserted my daughter—because you thought her father a bankrupt.

Sir Fred. Avowed, ma'am; and surely an honourable avowal, I not being worth a farthing in the whole world, could not possibly

have maintained her ; her father was unfortunately prevented the ability of doing it, and surely you would not have had me married your daughter to starve her—few women would be satisfied to be married and starved, I believe.

Mrs. Fretq. I give you joy of your happy change, Sir Frederick ; your intended wife's fortune is immense to be sure !

Sir Fred. It is enough ; I don't covet more than thirty thousand pounds.

Mrs. Fretq. What ?

Mr. Fretq. What ?

Mrs. Fretq. Thirty thousand pounds ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Mr. Fretq. Why, what the devil, did she tell you she had thirty thousand pounds ? why she has not a sixpence in the world, except three half-crowns I gave her this morning for pocket-money.

Sir Fred. How, Emma, is this really so ?

Emma. Oh ! dear, your sirship, pray forgive me, but indeed I had taken a liking to your sirship, and as I found you were set upon money, I told you that hum, that you might run away with me.

Sir Fred. Run away ! zounds ! I could run into the deepest pit in the kingdom rather than be thus fooled by breaking cits, and fond country girls, and——Heigh ho !

(sits down.)

Mrs. Fretq. Now, Sir Frederick, you see what you left my daughter for ; but where is the girl ? I brought her here with me.

Enter SIR GABRIEL, HARRIOT, and
HENRY.

Sir Gab. Here is your daughter, madam, and congratulate yourself on her having long since found a suitor worthy her exalted mind ; this noble youth (*pointing to Henry*) avows for her the purest love, and offers to take her for his wife, notwithstanding the embarrassment of her father's circumstances.

Mrs. Fretq. Bring that vagabond into my family indeed !

Sir Gab. A little more respect to my family, if you please, ma'am.

Mrs. Fretq. Your family, Sir Gabriel ?

Sir Gab. Yes, ma'am ; various circumstances combine to prove him my near relative, and his unshaken love for your daughter amidst her loss of fortune, endears him to me tenfold ; I will make up to him, what he might have expected from her father.

Fretq. No, Sir Gabriel, let him expect still, for here I stand with as firm credit as I did before you all thought me a bankrupt.

Mrs. Fretq. How, Mr. Fretquil ?

Fretq. Aye, Mrs. Fretquil, I wished to know the real sentiments of that man of quality there, you were crazy to have for your

son-in-law, and for that purpose, joined in this plot with Harriot, by which means I have discovered him to be the mercenary suitor I conjectured him to be, and have by the same means effectually got rid of him.

Mrs. Fretq. (aside) He has out-witted me at last.

Sir Fred. Oh! curse my silly head, for being so easily fooled.

Fretq. And so, Henry, I wish you joy of my daughter; you deserve her, and she'll yet be worth twenty thousand pounds, but not a farthing till my death.

Hen. In bestowing on me your daughter, sir, you give me a treasure far beyond the worth of gold.

Sir Gab. Mr. Fretquil, a word with you in private—I demand of you ten thousand pounds down for that young couple.

Fretq. I can't agree to it, indeed, Sir Gabriel.

Sir Gab. Then, sir, I can't agree to hide from the world your base designs on my niece, Mrs. Sedley.

Fretq. Your niece, Sir Gabriel!—Well, I'll give Harriot five thousand, to oblige you.

Sir Gab. You shall be exposed to the censure of a court of law, and what you fear worse, to your own wife.

Fretq. Well, well, my dear Sir Gabriel, it shall be ten thousand.

Enter MRS. SEDLEY hastily.

Mrs. Sed. Oh, save my Sedley! save him, I conjure you!

Sir Gab. Explain yourself, Clara; where is he?

Mrs. Sed. He now passed this house in the wildest agitation, his hair dishevelled, his mien gastly—oh! fly, and prevent his ruin.

Sir Gab. Be comforted, Clara, we will not return without him.

(Exeunt Sir Gabriel and Henry.)

Fretq. (going) Oh! ma'am, I'll—

Mrs. Sed. Stay, sir, don't trouble yourself; he who would tempt the honor of the wife, cannot be a welcome or a safe assistant to the husband.

Mrs Fretq. Mr. Fretquil, another word, and I sue for a divorce.

SIR FREDERICK *rises and comes forward.*

Sir Fred. Gad bless me, sister, is it you? I am very glad to see you, upon my honour—is there any little matter wherein I can be serviceable to you?

Mrs. Sed. Yes, sir, your absence would be a great relief to me; for your pretended friendship is now more hateful than your assumed want of recollection was cutting.

Sir Fred. Surely you don't know I am your brother.

Mrs. Sed. You, sir, have set me the ex-

ample of forgetting fallen relations, and you may rely, I'll follow it.

Sir Fred. (aside) So, here's another scrape! This will be a cross out for me in my uncle's books, I foresee. *(sits down again.)*

Mrs. Sed. Ha! is not that my Sedley's voice? *(to Harriot)* Pray, madam, retire with me a moment, that I may recover myself before I meet him—He has been cruel to me; but I feel I love him still, for I feel that he is still my husband.

(Exeunt Mrs. Sedley and Harriot.)
(A pause.)

Fretq. Mrs. Fretquil, what do we stay here for, I wonder?

Mrs. Fretq. Nay, I stay for you and Harriot.

Fretq. She don't seem likely to come home in a hurry, and I have no further business here; besides, I believe nobody wishes for our company.

Mrs. Fretq. I am sure, I don't covet theirs; so, Sir Frederick, once more I wish you joy of your great fortune—ha! ha! ha! *(Exit.)*

Fretq. Oh, zounds! but he has not got her yet, nor shan't have—here, where are you? you fibbing——

Emma. Oh! pray uncle, don't take me home.

Fretq. Why, what would the girl do here?

Emma. Oh, his sirship will break his heart, if I leave him.

Sir Fred. Oh, no! miss, I'll endeavour to bear up under my misfortunes.—I beg I may be no restraint upon you, miss.

Fretq. There, see how sorry he is.

Emma. What! does he mean, he don't care?

Fretq. Not a straw.

Emma. Oh! you naughty, vile, good-for-nothing man; I shall hate a sir as long as I live, and I had rather marry old Giles Clod, aunt Winny's ploughman, than a false-hearted Sir, though a hundred thousand were to come a sweet-hearting to me.

Fretq. Come along, do.

(*Exeunt Fretquil and Emma.*)

Sir Fred. So, there's an end of her nonsense! methinks I am like the dog and the bone in the fable, I have snapt at the shadow and lost the substance!

Enter SIR GABRIEL, SEDLEY and HENRY.

Sed. Sir Gabriel, the convictions you have given me of my wife's innocence, make me recoil from myself, as a monster who has been adding stings where he ought to have administered the most assuasive balm.

Sir Gab. To prove your atonement, sir, forswear the evil practices to which you have been so long addicted—live contented with the fortune I shall bestow on your wife, and afford to the world an example of the noblest penitent it can behold—a reformed gamester. See, your wife!

Enter MRS. SEDLEY and HARRIOT.

Sed. (*embracing her*) Oh, my Clara!

Mrs. Sed. Are you at length convinced, my Sedley?

Sed. Fully, of my own baseness,—but deeds shall prove a penitence which words can ill express.

Sir Gab. It now alone remains for me to reconcile unto us all, and most unto himself, my nephew Frederick; and these are the conditions on which he may regain my favor, that he drops his assumed title, and returns to the mercantile line, in which his father left him established.

Sir Fred. Thank you, uncle, thank you,—that is all meant very kindly, I dare say. But as to trade, I have no head for it, and as to my title, it is the very thing on which I build my hopes of making my fortune; for while there are cits, there will be cit's wives and daughters that prefer a title to a gold-mine,—so you must excuse my compliance.—Pray use my house as your own, call for what you please, and make yourselves happy, but it is now nine o'clock, and I have seven or eight routs, besides two balls, a concert, and a supper to attend, before I go to the masquerade; and be assured, that at one of them my title, person, or flattery, shall win me a wife to the tune of thirty thousand pounds. I'll court her

to-night, marry her to-morrow, and touch her cash the day after ; in a week, my high spirits shall bring down her's to sue for a divorce ; I'll readily barter ten thousand for my liberty, and in less than a fortnight, be my own free man again with twenty thousand in my pocket :—that's my plan, and pray is not that *the Dash of the Day* ? (Exit.)

Sir Gab. Profligate ! may time correct those errors which advice is lost in reasoning with.

Mrs. Sed. Trust to it, my dear uncle, it is the most powerful reformer. How clouded was my morning of life !—How exhilarating now, my happy noon ! and for the evening of my days, I will insure myself tranquillity by studying to deserve it ; then if misfortunes come, that thought will be my consolation. He who mocks calamity because he has never felt its pressure, deserves our censure ; he who by acting rightly endeavours to ward off its blows, and still sinks under them, merits our warmest pity.



